FUNDED BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Independent Midterm Evaluation of Mitigating Child Labor Through Quality Education in Pakistan

Save the Children—United Kingdom
Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-5-0047

2009

MACRO INTERNATIONAL INC.

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NOTE ON THE EVALUATION PROCESS

An independent consultant following a consultative and participatory approach managed this independent evaluation. All major stakeholders were consulted and informed throughout the evaluation, and its independence was not compromised during the process.

Security reasons prevented the evaluator from conducting any field missions, but alternative methodologies were implemented. The international evaluator (team leader) worked with a national consultant to plan and hold a two-day workshop. Focus groups were held in the project areas using guidelines prepared by the team leader. Focus group participants provided their notes to staff in sealed envelopes, and notes were transcribed by an evaluation assistant. Interviews of project staff and national nongovernmental organization partner staff were conducted using Internet technology. The opinions and recommendations included in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Labor, Save the Children—UK, or any other organization involved in the project.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report describes in detail the midterm evaluation, conducted during January through February 2009, of the Mitigating Child Labor through Quality Education in Pakistan (MCLEP) project. The report was prepared by Macro International Inc., according to agreements specified in its contract with USDOL's Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT). The evaluation of MCLEP in Pakistan was conducted and documented by Mei Zegers, an independent evaluator, and Rashda Niazi, a national workshop facilitator who supervised workshop note-takers and focus group transcription assistants, in collaboration with USDOL/OCFT staff, the project team, and stakeholders in Pakistan. Macro International Inc. would like to express sincere thanks to all parties involved in this evaluation: the independent evaluator, Save the Children—UK and its partners, and U.S. Department of Labor.

Funding for this evaluation was provided by the United States Department of Labor under Task Order number DOLU079K25845. Points of view or opinions in this evaluation report do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.

THANKS

The evaluator would like to commend the entire project team and the backstopping officers at Macro International Inc. for their input into the evaluation process. The project staff and national nongovernmental organization partner staff were helpful and accommodating despite the unusual system that needed to be implemented to compensate for the security issues. Thanks should also go to government officials, educators, representatives of community-based organizations, parents, and especially to the children for sharing their thoughts and ideas.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACL-QEFA	Addressing Child Labor—Quality Education for All (Project)
AHAN	*Aik Hunar, Aik Nagar* ("One Village, One Product")
BILA	Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2006)
CMDO	Community Mobilization and Development Organization (partner NGO)
CLU	Child Labour Unit
DMT	Directorate Manpower Training
DTT	Data Tracking Table
ECE	Early Childhood Education Centers
EI	Education Initiative
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ITA	*Idara–e-Taleem–o-Aagahi*
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCLEP	Mitigating Child Labor through Quality Education in Pakistan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NCHD	National Commission for Human Development
NFE	Nonformal Education
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPAE	National Plan of Action for Education for All
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
PCCWD	Provincial Commission for Children's Welfare and Development
PITE	Provincial Institute for Teachers' Education
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
SC-UK	Save the Children—United Kingdom
SEHER	Society for Empowering Human Resources
SPARC	Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child
SSAP	School Supply Assistance Program
TOR	Terms of Reference

UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
WESS	Water Environment and Sanitation Society (partner NGO)
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Pakistan, Save the Children—United Kingdom (SC-UK) implemented the Mitigating Child Labor Through Quality Education in Pakistan (MCLEP) project; initiated in September 2005 with a projected end date of September 2009. The target number of children to be withdrawn from child labor by the end of the project is 7,300 and the target number of children to be prevented is 8,420. The MCLEP project relies on education as the primary means to eliminate child labor.

The project focused on the following key areas:

1. Engaging communities, civil society, and local governments in making efforts promoting education and the eradication of child labor.

2. Improving access to and quality of education for working and at-risk[1] children in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan.

3. Strengthening national institutions and policies to effectively address the issues of child labor and education.

4. Ensuring the sustainability of project activities and benefits to the primary stakeholders.

The purpose of the midterm evaluation was to assess the achievements of the project toward reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the cooperative agreement and project document. The project could not be evaluated as planned at the time of the actual project midterm because of security issues limiting the access of an independent evaluator to project areas. The donor and implementing agency considered, nevertheless, that it was important to perform a midterm evaluation to assess progress and make recommendations for the remainder of the project period. As a result, the international evaluator designed an alternative methodology that still allowed for (1) an analysis of the key issues in terms of successes and challenges and (2) making recommendations. Thus, an international independent evaluator led the evaluation process during January and February 2009.

The evaluation methodology consisted of a document review, a study of photos of project activities and photos of some awareness-raising materials, interviews conducted with staff and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners using internet technology, 46 self-led focus groups held in the project sites (with results provided to staff in sealed envelopes for transcription by an independent evaluation assistant), a two-day stakeholder workshop, and fact-checking by e-mail. Although the methodology was not as ideal as a personal and direct evaluation of field activities would have been, the international evaluator still believes that it was possible to draw some useful conclusions and make recommendations.

[1] "At-risk" refers to children that are vulnerable of dropping out of schools and falling into child labor or out-of-school children at risk of entering work.

The project is likely to come close to meeting its targets, particularly if a well-deserved project extension is allotted. The difficult security situation contributed to a slowdown of project implementation, but this can be compensated during a project extension. The project has a well-functioning management system, including good administrative and financial disbursement mechanisms. The project has been able to build a substantial number of good partnerships in the project areas, including those with governmental agencies, other local NGOs, local authorities, community-based organizations, teachers, parents, and children.

Some local partners are not yet strongly convinced of the usefulness of cooperating effectively with the project. Capacity strengthening of existing and new local partners needs to continue. Awareness raising has been effective in drawing attention to the consequences of child labor, to the lack of education of children, and to how these affect their physical, mental, moral, and emotional development. Strategies reducing child labor and promoting education—particularly in high-quality government schools—need intensified support for policy change. The project has invested a great deal of time and effort into improving the quality of education through teacher training, improvement of the physical learning environment, and provision of learning materials and school supplies.

The project has built effectively on the experience of a previous SC-UK child labor education project in Pakistan. A well-qualified SC-UK education technical expert, together with staff from the former NGO project partners, contributed substantially to adapting the lessons learned in the previous project. Of particular note is the well-functioning monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that includes useful qualitative data indicators. The M&E system is not only used to track data, as is commonly the case, but is actually vigorously used in project planning and adaptation. The qualitative monitoring component is clear and easy to use. Efforts have been undertaken to start working on sustainability. Children directly involved in the project are likely to continue through the program and will continue to benefit after the project ends. Although the project is not expected to ensure that nonformal education (NFE) centers continue after the project period, it would be valuable if NFE centers and vocational training programs continue after the end of the project. There are concerns among stakeholders that long-term sustainability of NFE centers will not be feasible. Beneficiaries currently receiving school supplies support may drop out and move into child labor if that support ends.

Important good practices developed for each project component include clear criteria and guidelines, which assisted staff and project members in implementing and managing the project. The project has a well-functioning M&E system that includes an interesting and useful qualitative component. Recommendations include some that would be useful for future projects and others that are of particular interest for the project to consider for the remaining project period.

Recommendations for the remainder of the project include focusing strongly on further awareness raising and advocacy at the national, provincial, district, and community level so that the models developed through the project are extended and replicated. Advocacy is also needed to ensure that key factors (such as recognition of the equivalency of NFE to the government primary school level) are formalized. Continued capacity strengthening of NGO partner staff, teachers, and other stakeholders is needed. The project needs to concentrate efforts on sustainability during the remainder of the project. To ensure sustainability, the coordination of

individual key stakeholders and groups at all levels needs a strong focus. The project should work toward the dissemination of lessons learned and good practices by collecting case studies and developing manuals and guidelines. The M&E system is of particular interest in this respect and should also be shared with other child labor projects and initiatives in other countries.

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I INTRODUCTION

> "We love our school and we love to learn in the school. We are hard workers."
>
> ***—Child stakeholder workshop participant***

In Pakistan, Save the Children—United Kingdom (SC-UK) implemented the Mitigating Child Labor through Quality Education in Pakistan (MCLEP) project in September 2005, with a currently projected end date of September 2009. The target for the number of children to be withdrawn by the end of the project is 7,300 and the number of children to be prevented is 8,420. The MCLEP project concentrates on education as a primary means to eliminate child labor.

The purpose of the midterm evaluation was to assess the achievements of the project toward reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the cooperative agreement and project document. The project could not be evaluated as planned at the time of the actual project midterm because of security issues limiting access of an independent evaluator to project areas. The donor and implementing agency considered, nevertheless, that it was important to perform a midterm evaluation to assess progress and make recommendations for the remainder of the project period. As a result, the international evaluator designed an alternative methodology that still allowed for an analysis of the key issues in terms of successes, challenges, and recommendations. An international independent evaluator led the evaluation process in the period of January to February 2009.

Key areas of project focus include the following:

1. Engaging communities, civil society, and local governments in making conscious efforts for the promotion of education and the eradication of child labor.

2. Improving access and quality of education for working and at-risk[2] children in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan.

3. Strengthening national institutions and policies to effectively address the issues of child labor and education.

4. Ensuring the sustainability of project activities and benefits to the primary stakeholders.

Project actions were expected to concentrate on developing nonformal education (NFE), vocational training and literacy, teacher training, government school interventions, school infrastructure projects, school council training, creation and capacity strengthening of community support groups, support for developing education proposals, and capacity strengthening of implementing stakeholders and other key partners. The principal project stakeholders were children, parents, teachers, community members, district government officials, provincial government officials, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners.

[2] "At-risk" means children vulnerable of dropping out of schools and falling into child labor or out-of-school children at risk of entering work.

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II EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The evaluation considered all activities that have been implemented from project inception in September 2005 until the time of the evaluation in early 2009. The evaluation considered issues of project design, implementation, lessons learned, reliability, and recommendations for future projects.

As stated in the terms of reference (TOR), the goals of the evaluation process are to—

1. Help individual organizations identify areas of good performance and areas where project implementation can be improved.

2. Assist the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) to learn more about what is or is not working in terms of the overall conceptualization and design of Education Initiative (EI) projects within the broad OCFT technical cooperation program framework.

3. Assess the degree to which objectives relevant to the country-specific situation they address have been achieved.

4. Assess progress in terms of children's working and educational status (i.e., withdrawal and prevention from the worst forms of child labor; enrollment, retention, and completion of educational programs).

The evaluation also needed to determine the extent to which the project contributes to reaching the five major goals of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)-funded child labor elimination projects (see Section IV).

Specific issues that SC-UK would like to be addressed during this evaluation include—

1. Effective arrangement of direct educational services for target children.

2. How far the project will impact on improving the lives of target children.

3. How sustainable the initiatives are.

4. If there is any active and effective monitoring and support system for the quality implementation of project activities.

It is important to stress that the evaluation was intended to learn from the past and study how efforts can be further improved during the remaining implementation period of the project. The evaluation concentrates on what should be avoided, what can be improved, and what can be added so that the elimination of the child labor—particularly in its worst forms—can be achieved more effectively.

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III EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the achievements of the project toward reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the cooperative agreement and project document. The evaluation considered all activities that were implemented over the life of the project until the midterm evaluation, addressing issues of project design, implementation, lessons learned, reliability and recommendations for a future project.

The international evaluator could not personally visit the project sites or the evaluation workshop due to security issues. As a result, a special method was developed to ensure that the project, donor, and all stakeholders could benefit from the lessons learned thus far, so that suggestions for improvements could still be made for the remainder of the project period.

The evaluation team was composed of four individuals who were closely assisted by different project and SC-UK staff. The team leader was an international evaluator who worked with a national evaluation consultant and two national assistants.

To ensure a thorough evaluation the evaluator used a combination of methods so that a well-rounded evaluation could be carried out:

- Document review, including direct project-related documents as well as the overall context in Pakistan regarding education, child labor issues, national policy and strategy documents, and other potential issues of importance. The project provided updates of other donor activities in the area of child labor in Pakistan and other relevant materials.

- Photos of project activities and of a few awareness-raising materials were forwarded by project staff to enable the international evaluator and national colleagues to have a good visual understanding of the project activities. Photos of schools, interior of schoolrooms and school grounds were included but were, unfortunately, somewhat limited in number.

- The international evaluator developed several special but simple focus group guideline forms, with input from project staff and the national evaluation consultant. Separate forms were developed for the different types of key stakeholders to ensure that all matters of special relevance to their issues of interest were covered. The form provided stakeholder groups the opportunity to provide direct input. Key groups included project and partner NGO staff, district leaders, teachers, community leaders and community committees, parents, and children. The forms were filled out and inserted in a closed envelope for transcription by one of the national evaluation assistants for later analysis. A total of 46 forms were filled in by different groups. Forms included simple instructions so that groups could fill them in independently, although contact details of the project staff were provided in case they needed any clarification of questions. The transcribed focus group results indicate that the groups were able to understand the guidelines. Useful information was obtained through analysis of the focus group results.

- The international evaluation consultant carried out several interviews live over the internet with the SC-UK staff project director, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist, and with staff of the project's national NGO partners, the Community Mobilisation and Development Organization (CMDO), and the Water, Environment, and Sanitation Society (WESS). The national evaluation consultant and one of the assistants also held separate discussions with teachers and children during the stakeholders' workshop.

- A two-day stakeholder workshop was held to collect detailed data using an approach that allowed all participants to comment on relevant issues in terms of successes, challenges, and recommendations. All relevant issues were prioritized to ensure that the key points could be clearly identified. Different stakeholder groups were formed to discuss the issues relevant to them.

- The national evaluator provided support to plan and act as key facilitator for the stakeholder workshop. She also wrote a report summarizing her interpretations and perceptions of the key issues based on the workshop discussions and individual interviews with staff, teachers, and children. The national evaluator also supervised the workshop note-taking and the transcription of focus group results. The national assistants provided support facilitating some of the working groups during the workshop, providing written workshop notes and transcribing the field focus group results.

- The international evaluator held several discussions over the internet with the national evaluator to clarify issues and jointly discuss findings.

The role of the project staff was to coordinate with the evaluation team and provide necessary input. The staff also assisted with the logistics of the data collection (through focus group forms) in the field and the holding of the workshop.

The stakeholder workshop was attended by project staff, partner representatives, parents, children, teachers, other community-level individuals, and government and other local stakeholders.

The individuals who participated in the different focus groups in their respective localities were not the same people who attended the workshop. The focus group and workshop participants met the following criteria:

- The overall sample of sites selected were representative of all project actions. Sites selected included locations (1) where the project had particular success in reaching objectives, (2) sites where the project faced greater challenges, and (3) sites with mixed results.

- Representatives from all key stakeholders were included.

- Children and parents from at least two project locations where each of the NGO partners are working were included. Five children, of which two were boys and three were girls, attended the workshop.

The evaluation team maintained the confidentiality of the information and feedback elicited during the interviews and collected from the focus group forms.

Following the workshop, the international evaluator discussed the overall results with the project staff via internet. Project staff provided the international evaluator with additional clarifications on some of the issues raised in the workshop, as well as focus groups results and project data.

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IV PROJECT DESIGN AND RELEVANCE

TOR Questions: *How does this project fit into the overall design of the Government of Pakistan's Timebound Program, being supported by the International Labour Organization, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC), as well as other ILO-IPEC projects in Pakistan? Specifically, what has been the contribution of this project, if any?*

The project contributes to the Government of Pakistan's commitment to reach its targets under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on education and other targets such as poverty reduction and gender.[3] The most recently published report on progress toward attainment of the MDGs in Pakistan specifically notes the link between poverty and education in the national context.[4] The project contributes to improving access and the quality of basic education and vocational training of girls and boys.

The project design supports government programs, including the National Policy and Plan of Action on Child Labor (2008–2016) that currently serves as the basis for the Timebound Programme on Worst Forms of Child Labor.[5] The project is also in line with the 2002 Labor Policy in support of ILO Convention 182, the 2007 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and the National Plan of Action for Education for All (NPAE) (2001–2015).[6] Stakeholder workshop participants noted that the project effectively contributes to the country's NPAE. The Early Childhood Education (ECE) project component is a new element in donor-supported child labor projects but is well in line with the NPAE. Early Childhood Education is one of the three pillars of the NPAE. ECE is recognized as an important element in preparing children for effective learning in primary schools.[7] The 2007 National Social Protection Strategy also cites specific actions to address the elimination of child labor. The Pakistan Decent Work Country Program further cites the importance of nonformal education, as promoted through the MCLEP, as a relevant means of reducing child labor.[8]

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[3] Government of Pakistan. (2006). *Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2006*. Islamabad, Pakistan: Author.
[4] Ibid.
[5] International Labour Organization. (2008). *Pakistan Decent Work Country Programme*. (Web Version). Retrieved on February 5, 2009, from www.ilo.org/asia/decentwork/dwcp/lang--en/docName—WCMS_100054/index .htm.
[6] Ibid.; International Labour Organization, International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour. (2007). *Subregional information system on child labor: National legislation and policies against child labor in Pakistan*. Retrieved on April 30, 2007, from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi/ipec/responses/Pakistan /national.htm; International Labour Organization. (2003). *Multi-bilateral programme of technical cooperation: Supporting the time-bound programme on the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Pakistan*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO-IPEC; Ministry of Education. (2000). *National Plan of Action for Education for All 2001–2015: Pakistan*. Retrieved on February 2, 2002, from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/ skills/hrdr/init/ pak_6.htm; Ministry of Finance. (2007, April 25). *Ensuring a demographic dividend: Unleashing human potential in a globalized world*. Islamabad, Pakistan: Author.
[7] Ministry of Education. (2000). *National Plan of Action for Education for All 2001–2015: Pakistan*. Retrieved on February 2, 2002, from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/hrdr/init/pak_6.htm. The NOAE notes that Early Childhood Education was an important component of the public education system through 1979 but decreased during the 1980s.
[8] International Labour Organization. (2008). *Pakistan Decent Work Country Programme*. (Web Version). Retrieved on February 5, 2009, from http://www.ilo.org/asia/decentwork/dwcp/lang--en/docName--WCMS_100054/ index.htm.

The project also contributes to the Pakistani Government's goal of increasing security in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The FATA region is located within the North-West Frontier Province area, which is one of the project areas.

USDOL is also funding ILO-IPEC to support the National Policy and Plan of Action on Child Labor (2008–2016) and to implement other actions on child labor. In Pakistan, the ILO is providing inputs and technical support into national policies and strategies that have an impact on child labor. The ILO also provides support in the areas of labor policy, employment policies and strategies, vocational training policy, child labor policy, bonded labor policy, youth policy, macroeconomic and growth policies and the poverty reduction strategies. The MCLEP project has maintained regular contacts with ILO-IPEC and works in line other ILO-IPEC actions in Pakistan. The MCLEP has, for example, worked with the ILO on creating synergies to support provincial governments, notably on the establishment of Child Labour Units in the NWFP. MCLEP is currently working with the ILO to activate a Child Labour Unit and assist the unit to implement its mandate. The project has also interacted with the ILO on awareness raising, including through combining activities adapted to the project sites.

ILO-IPEC is currently implementing one national project, Activating Media to Combat Child Labour, and another project is expected to be launched soon, entitled Eliminating Abusive Child Labour, to be carried out in NWFP and Sindh provinces.[9] The ILO also completed a project on children in deep sea fishing in Gwadar District, Baluchistan in 2008.

TOR Question: *Does the project design seem to be adequately supporting the five major goals of USDOL-funded projects? If not, which ones are not being supported and why not?*

The project design adequately supports the five major goals of USDOL-funded projects:

1. Withdrawing or preventing children from involvement in exploitive child labor through the provision of direct educational services.

2. Strengthening policies on child labor and education, the capacity of national institutions to combat child labor, and formal and transitional education systems that encourage children engaged in or at-risk of engaging in exploitive labor to attend school.

3. Raising awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures.

4. Supporting research and the collection of reliable data on child labor.

5. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

[9] As per information provided to the evaluator by e-mail by Muhammad Saifullah Chaudhry, Senior Programme Officer of the ILO office in Islamabad.

The remainder of the midterm evaluation report will address the extent to which the project is making progress to reach these five major goals.

Additional USDOL Question:[10] *How well does this project fit into the other assistance pouring into areas of Baluchistan and NWFP?*

A number of other agencies, including the ILO and other international and national NGOs, are providing educational services to vulnerable children in the two project provinces.[11] The MCLEP project complements the work of other agencies/NGOs working in the area and in some cases synergies have been created.[12] UNICEF provides school supplies and other support, which help to balance NGO partners' support to other needy children in Baluchistan and NWFP/FATA. The International Rescue Committee supports teacher training, early childhood education, and vocational training in NWFP and FATA.[13] The contribution of the MCLEP is significant because it is aimed at withdrawing/preventing 15,720 children from child labor through education. The MCLEP also works to improve the quality of education through teacher training, educational materials, and other forms of support.

TOR Question: *Were the project purpose and outputs realistic? Were the indicators appropriate? Was reporting against the project's indicators adequate in terms of units of measurement, clarity of targets?*

The project purpose and expected outputs were realistic. The project goal is "Child labor reduced in targeted districts in Pakistan." The project purpose was stated as "Working children withdrawn and at-risk children prevented from engaging in exploitive child labor are educated." Staff noted that terminology such as *reduction*, *prevention*, and *withdrawal* are very appropriate in the project areas. The high prevalence of child labor in the project areas means that the term "elimination of child labor" would have been premature at this stage.

The project outputs and indicators were mostly realistic. The indicators are quite specific and relevant to the project interventions. The indicators are also quite consistent with the project document and logical framework covering almost all project aspects. Project NGO partner staff agreed that the indicators and other project planning aspects were appropriate. As a representative of WESS reported, "Fortunately, we have good indicators in this project from the very first day, our roles were very clear and also our monitoring tasks were clear. There was a roadmap. We found this very effective to maintain quality in the program."

[10] Additional questions are those that have been requested through oral discussions with the USDOL officers and were not included in the Terms of Reference for the current evaluation.
[11] They include national NGOs that are supported by UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO, and Rotary, such as the Society for Community Support and Primary Education (SCSPEB), Basic Education and Employable Skill Knowledge (BEST), Innovative Development Organisation (IDO), Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP), and Youth Resource Centre (YRC).
[12] See Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 for examples.
[13] International Rescue Committee. (2009). *Programs in Pakistan.* Retrieved on February 9, 2009, from http://www.theirc.org/where/asia_pakistan_programs.html.

One difficulty was noted, however, regarding the indicator on retention in a government school. According to the operationalization of the indicator, a child is considered dropped out if he/she is absent more than 75% of the time. Children in the NFE program go to school year round. However, formal schools are usually closed in the coldest months and families often take time to travel to summer or winter grounds during the hot or cold seasons. As a result, some children may attend 50% in one month but return to attend for 80% of the time in another month. It is difficult to decide whether to include such children as dropouts or not. The evaluator recommends that children should continue to be monitored even if their attendance falls below 75%. They should be monitored for the same time period that children who have not dropped out are monitored. If a child's attendance improves to 75% or more for at least two months during this time period they can be counted as retained.

Some partner staff also pointed out that the expected outcomes are at almost the same level as in the previous SC-UK child labor education project in the Punjab, titled Addressing Child Labor—Quality Education for All (ACL-QEFA). Considering that the areas covered by the current project are more affected by security issues and many centers/schools are very distant from each other, it has been somewhat challenging to meet the targets. Despite these difficulties, however, the project is largely on track.

The indicators do not take certain conditions into account to finely measure the situation of children enrolled in the program. The format of the technical progress report do not allow for reporting of what the project considers to be some important data. The numerator is calculated as: *"ever enrolled—dropped out—still working in hazardous conditions."* Information on children who are still enrolled but are also still in hazardous labor cannot be reported, although this information could be important for understanding and planning future actions.

Children can be mainstreamed either after they complete their NFE education (after 3.5 years) or, if they are ready, after a shorter time period such as after one year There is no indicator to track such children to determine whether they drop out of formal schools during the later project period. In one example provided by the Project Director, for example, a child might be mainstreamed into a government school and after six months to one year they are technically reported as *completed*. If such a child drops out a month after being reported as *completed*, he/she cannot be tracked even if the project has not yet ended. All children enrolled in the project—whether mainstreamed early or at the end of their NFE program—need to be tracked throughout the project implementation period. It is important to note that monitoring also serves as a tool and not just for reporting purposes. Tracking such children will help ensure that mechanisms are in place so that such children can be monitored and actions to return them to school can be undertaken if necessary.

The four-year duration of the project design did not take the duration of the NFE programs into account. One cohort of children normally completes a cycle in 3.5 years, and the project enrolled children in two cohorts. The project operates 270 centers, not all of which could be immediately started at project inception. Project staff indicated that the identification of target children and subsequent establishment of centers was a very rigorous process to ensure that the correct and most deserving children were selected. The first cohort will complete their program during the project

duration. Some children in the second cohort will still be attending an NFE center at a time when the project is slated to end and will only complete about one year after project completion.[14] This situation is particularly prevalent in the Baluchistan project areas. SC-UK is exploring how to address and solve these issues.

TOR Question: *The MCLEP project is implemented in areas of Pakistan that sometimes face security challenges and have a higher proportion of religious extremism and other societal problems than other areas of Pakistan. Was the project design appropriate for this kind of implementing environment?*

The project design did not take the deteriorating security situation into account. However, the security problems could not have been foreseen when the project was designed. An attack on the NGO partner office in Peshawar, for example, and subsequent problems encountered by female staff not being able to visit project areas for monitoring could not have been predicted. The project did find that the security challenges affected the quality of the interventions, since monitoring and ongoing technical support for the NFE centers, ECE, and other activities are an essential project component. A few of the centers had to be closed down temporarily.

Additional USDOL Question: *Many children in the project areas are Afghan children. The project decided not to target them. Any suggestions on what can be done for these children?*

Project implementers made the decision not to work with Afghan communities that are living in refugee camps in NWFP and Baluchistan. The reason for not including children in refugee camps was that there was a possibility that the project might face difficulties if the situation in Afghanistan changed and the children returned home before the completion of the project. Many Afghan families have now permanently settled in Pakistan, however, and have also acquired Pakistani nationality. As a result, the project staff members believe that there are a few hundred children in NFE who are of Afghani heritage but who are now permanently settled in Pakistan. Exact data on this aspect is not available at this time. Only a few organized refugee camps are left in Pakistan because most of the refugees have either mingled with local communities and settled for good or have returned back home. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is working with the refugees in the remaining camps.

TOR Question: *Is the project able to accurately monitor and measure the USDOL common indicators, specifically the withdrawal and prevention of children from child labor? Do both SC-UK and national partners WESS, CMDO have an accurate and similar understanding of the USDOL definitions of withdrawal and prevention? If not, why not? What actions, if any, has the project undertaken to address reporting against the project's indicators.*

The project and NGO partner staff members were able to accurately describe the meaning of the USDOL common indicators.[15] Details on the monitoring of indicators, including the USDOL common indicators are discussed in Section 6.3 The USDOL common indicators are incorporated in the data base being used by the MCLEP project and are tracked by the project

[14] Or about six months after the project completes.
[15] They were questioned directly to provide definitions.

NGO partner field teams. Children are classified as withdrawn if they meet the criteria in terms of complete withdrawal, limited working hours, and non-hazardous working conditions. Types of hazardous and exploitive trades for children were listed and shared with the field teams so that they could ensure that criteria were met.

Both NGO partners were also able to cite the calculation for determining the completion rate as:

$$\text{Completion Rate} = \frac{\text{Total No. of Children Mainstreamed + Completed the Course}}{\text{Total No. of Children Ever Enrolled}}$$

TOR Question: *What were the criteria used to identify targeted children? Were these criteria useful and effective?*

The criteria are—

- Children in the age bracket of 7 to 12 years at the start of their inclusion in the program.
- Children under the age of seven (for the ECE program).
- Out-of-school children.
- Children who either themselves are working in hazardous and exploitive working conditions or their elder siblings are engaged in hazardous forms of child labor.

Project partner field teams found these criteria helpful while probing and identifying potential target children. The project staff and NGO project partners focused strong attention on the process of the identification of child beneficiaries. A profile of each potential beneficiary was developed. Field teams performed cross-verification of the information that had been provided about any particular child.

Government officials attending the stakeholders' workshop indicated that among the most important project successes were the good identification of problems, well-targeted allocation of funds, and selection of project sites through needs surveys.

The selection of project areas needs to be linked to availability of microcredit, adult education, and/or other livelihoods development opportunities so that linking can be more effective. The budget also needs to include an allocation to cover the cost of networking with agencies that promote livelihoods.

TOR Question: *What definition of hazardous labor is being used? How is it determined whether children are still working or not?*

The project used a list prepared by the ILO which included children working in cross-border smuggling, commercial sexual exploitation, brick kilns, and other activities. A disadvantage is that the list does not include many of the hazardous kinds of labor that exist in the project areas. Some local activities are hazardous but seem obscure to outsiders, such as the catching of birds in the mountains. The project has added some activities that are hazardous and prevalent locally,

although they request more assistance with determining how to define whether a particular activity would be considered hazardous or not. Other aspects that need to be determined are the degree to which overall security should be considered in determining if an activity is hazardous or not. If, for example, a 15-year-old works in a tea shop for three hours per day but that shop is in a high-risk location, would that be considered “hazardous”?

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V IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS

TOR Question: *At midterm, is the project on track in terms of meeting its stated purpose and outputs in the Project document? If not, what seem to be the factors contributing to delays?*

The number of children currently enrolled and withdrawn/prevented from child labor through the project according to the most recent data is: 14,245, of whom 7,980 are boys and 6,265 are girls.

Table 1: Children Ever Enrolled

Characteristic	M	F	Total
Total Withdrawn	3,367	3,365	6,732
Total Prevented	4,613	2,900	7,513
Total	**7,980**	**6,265**	**14,245**

A number of children have dropped out of the program as a result of the security issues in the area. Other children have dropped out as a result of internal migration or, in the case of girls, because they have reached puberty. As girls grow older they are more restricted and withdrawn from school and, despite rigorous mobilization efforts, it is difficult to draw them back into the program. Children who have dropped out due to internal migration, particularly prevalent in Baluchistan, may have been enrolled in schools in their new areas but it is difficult to track their situation.

Table 2: Children Currently Enrolled, Excluding Program Dropouts

Characteristic	M	F	Total
Total Withdrawn	3,011	3,833	5,844
Total Prevented	4,212	2,545	6,757
Total	**7,223**	**5,378**	**12,604**

Currently included in the project are 12,601 children, of which 413 are currently still in hazardous labor. The project is trying to ensure that these children are withdrawn. Under the vocational component, an additional 1,725 children will be enrolled and withdrawn during the current project period. This will increase the number of children withdrawn or prevented to 14,326 (if there are not further dropouts and children still in hazardous labor are withdrawn).

Other key figures include the following:

- Retention rate of children in NFE program is 83%, while completion rate so far is 17%.
- Retention rate of children in School Supplies program is 77%, while completion rate thus far is 3%.

- The participation rate of children in ECE program is 88%, while completion rate is 47% to date.

- Retention rate of children in the vocational program is 100% so far.

The project is expected to reach its targets if a six-month extension is allotted; however, it should be recalled that progress was hampered by the difficult security situation in the project areas.

Additional USDOL Question: *Are children sometimes removed from one type of child labor into another? Are some children still working? What is being done about the situation?*

The project staff states that they do not have any data on whether children are removed from one type of child labor and enter into another.

Approximately 5% of the children are still working. The project addresses this issue by holding frequent counseling sessions with parents and children to ensure that they stop working in trades that are considered hazardous. Children in hazardous trades work in such things as cross-border smuggling, auto repair workshops, and bakeries.

5.1.1 Policy Development and Governance

TOR Question: *What have been the major challenges and opportunities, if any, of implementing coordination with the host country government at the national, provincial, and local levels? Please assess the effectiveness of technical assistance being provided by SC-UK and partner organizations to government officials and entities.*

The MCLP project works intensively with various government agencies at national, provincial, and local levels, although much depends on the level of responsiveness of specific individuals. The project contributed to discussions at the national level for the Medium Term Plan of Action for Combating Worst Forms of Child Labour in Pakistan, covering the period of 2008–2016. The project also contributed their experiences in a UNICEF workshop on vulnerable adolescents.[16] Similarly, the project attended and provided input into provincial level consultative workshops on child labor.

Some NFE programs already exist in the project areas but they are not oriented toward child laborers, nor do they include mechanisms to assist children to transition and be mainstreamed into formal education. Although during project inception the project established contacts with the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), which promotes literacy, the contacts ultimately did not need to be taken to the next level. Almost all of the children that were identified and selected for the Literacy and Vocational Training component of the project were

[16] Save the Children—UK. (2008). Mitigating Child Labor through Quality Education in Pakistan Project: September 2007–February 2008 (Technical Progress Report). Islamabad, Pakistan: Author; Save the Children—UK. (2008). Mitigating Child Labor through Quality Education in Pakistan Project: March 2008–September 2008 (Technical Progress Report). Islamabad, Pakistan: Author.

school dropouts who already had basic literacy skills. Aside from literacy tests of potential vocational training students, no major activity with NCHD was further developed.

At provincial and district levels the project worked to raise the awareness of government departments and agencies. Government officials attending the stakeholders' workshop cited the establishment of good working relationships among the stakeholders as one of the three best successes of the project. In NWFP, for example the Education Department was cited as very cooperative and supportive. In Baluchistan the Directorate Manpower Training and the Provincial Institute for Teachers' Education were among those mentioned as good partners. At the same time they—as well as project staff and NGO project partner representatives—also noted that coordination still needs to be further improved. Several focus groups noted a lack of interest in the project from some government departments and officials, and a lack of motivation to improve sustainability of the project's efforts.

The project developed a number of joint efforts such as the establishment of a Child Labor Monitoring cell in Baluchistan and teacher training for NFE through government training institutions. The project participated in experience sharing with the Provincial Commission for Children's Welfare and Development (PCCWD). Involving government officials and local authorities in action planning and implementation was mentioned as a key positive lessons learned for effectiveness during the stakeholders' workshop.

Table 3: Local Government Departments and Agency Partners

NGO Project Partner	Government Departments
CMDO working in NWFP and FATA	Secretariat of Education FATA Directorate of Education FATA Directorate of Education NWFP District Governments Executive District Offices (Education) Assistant District Offices (Education) Department of Industries and Labour Welfare Provincial Institute for Teachers' Education
Water Environment and Sanitation Society (WESS) working in Baluchistan Province	Education Department Government of Baluchistan Social Welfare and Community Development Director Manpower Training Government of Baluchistan Provincial Institute for Teachers' Education

The government offices and training centers in the two project areas provided support that included concrete and direct actions. One of the key successes was the ability of the project to associate public teacher training institutes to provide training for project-associated teachers. Such relationships may contribute to sustainability of project efforts over the long term.

Evidence of support from government departments and officials in NWFP and FATA Areas:

- Memorandum of Understanding with government departments signed.
- Officials were generally supportive.
- Government provided buildings and schools for interventions.
- Government officials participated in almost all project meetings.
- Government provided training for teachers.
- Government officials and authorities provided guidance and advice.

Evidence of support from government departments and officials in Baluchistan:

- Memorandum of Understanding signed with government departments.
- Provided space for area Monitoring and Evaluation Cell.
- Officials were supportive.
- Project staff were supported to approach targeted government schools.
- Administrative and teaching staff advised on selection of government schools to work in close collaboration with project team in various project activities: identifying at-risk children, participating in capacity-building programs, and helping mainstream NFE and ECE children into formal government schools.
- Government officials facilitated and actively participated in different forums organized by the project.
- As per the Memorandum of Understanding with the Education Department, the Baluchistan Department of Education agreed to provide primary completion certificates to those children who successfully complete their courses under MCLEP project.
- Education Department agreed to incorporate project quantitative achievements in formal government statistics.
- Local government officials participated in awareness raising and motivation of parents and community.
- Local government assists with the monitoring of NFEs and teachers.

The Directorate Manpower Training (DMT) Government of Baluchistan, which is responsible for vocational training, agreed to mainstream (former) child laborers into their programs. The DMT will provide formal certificates to the trainees at the end of WESS-supported trainings.

Gemstone cutting, carving, and polishing have been included as a trade in regular vocational training courses through the establishment of a new training facility supported by WESS. The DMT also appointed a focal person to ensure smooth liaison with WESS during and after training. The Baluchistan DMT, unfortunately, has limited training opportunities for working children in general.

Although the efforts of the provincial and district government departments in the project areas are laudable, a number of challenges impeded the reaching of full project potential. Challenges included frequent government staff transfers, which affected the quality of personal relations that the project had worked hard to build. Normally, not all senior government staff are reassigned at the same time, but because of changes in the political situation many officials were—creating a large vacuum. Other reported problems included the bureaucratic complexities, corruption, and poor record-keeping systems of government offices.

In NWFP/FATA the Child Labour Department lacked specialized staff, and the staff of the Provincial Institute for Teachers' Education was weak in Early Childhood Education training for teachers and overall pedagogy. In Baluchistan, the Provincial Institute for Teachers' Education (PITE) is cooperating well and training provided through PITE is of good quality.

WESS staff noted that several agencies in Baluchistan showed little interest in working innovatively. The technical capacities of some other government officials also need to be strengthened further.

The complexity and differences in organizational structures of governmental agencies in the provinces are not conducive to efficient project partnerships. Literacy and nonformal education in Baluchistan fall under the Department of Social Welfare and Women's Development. In NWFP, literacy and nonformal education fall under the Education Department, which facilitates the mainstreaming of children into formal government schools. WESS in Baluchistan addressed this issue by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Education to ensure that no bottlenecks would occur during mainstreaming.

In Baluchistan the project was able to provide technical support to the Child Labor Unit, which was created with the support of the ILO. However, the CLU still remained a dormant entity since no concrete steps beyond its establishment had been taken by the government. Lack of financial resources impeded the correct functioning of the CLU. Under the MCLEP project in Baluchistan, an agreement has been signed to support the centrality and efficacy of the CLU. According to the agreement it was decided that SC-UK/WESS would support the CLU for two years. The CLU is now working to mainstream child labor concerns into development policies and programs. With the support of SC-UK/WESS, the CLU has also started providing capacity strengthening and technical support to relevant officials on child labor issues.

In some instances it was difficult to build specific partnerships. Government officials who participated in the stakeholders' workshop noted that ministries often lacked trust in the work of projects such as MCLEP. A number of meetings were held with the Child Labour Unit in NWFP in order to discuss and eventually sign a partnership so that CMDO could provide this Unit with support. Despite the efforts of the project and offers of financial and technical support, the

responsible individuals in NWFP were reluctant to sign the partnership and, as a result, could not yet fully benefit from project support.

In Baluchistan the NFE program of the Social Welfare Department lacks sufficient financial resources to fully implement its mandate. Insufficient resources for education are allocated from the national budget to NFE in general. This issue was also identified as a challenging concern during the stakeholders' workshop. Other issues impeding full effectiveness included the lack of harmonization of policies and strategies at provincial and district levels, and conflicts of political interest.[17]

Parents and community group representatives in the stakeholders' workshop noted that they were disappointed that more significant changes in government policies to withdraw and prevent child labor through education are not yet being implemented. They suggested that there should be monthly meetings of community representatives, parents, and teachers to discuss children's progress and how they can lobby for policy change.

Government officials participating in the stakeholders' workshop stated that the government still lacks the rules and regulations that would improve ownership of project activities by the government agencies. Rules and regulations need to be supported by adequate resources so that the actions initiated through the project are sustained.

In the stakeholders' workshop, parents and community group representatives noted that increased coordination of parents with local authorities through monthly meetings was an important project success.

5.1.2 Public-Private Partnerships

Some public-private partnerships were developed. The project participated in consultative meetings organized by the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Special Education Department in Baluchistan, together with public and private sector representatives. Some NFE centers are being mainstreamed into private schools, as are some individual children. Teachers from private schools were hired to analyze the assessment tools of children's progress in the NFE centers.

In some cases the private sector definition includes only relationships between the public sector and the for-profit sector. Nonprofit organizations are, however, also sometimes included under the definition of private partners in the public-private partnerships.[18] The MCLEP includes nonprofit organizations when discussing their development of public-private partnerships. The project developed a number of partnerships with both public and nonprofit (i.e., NGO) agencies. Some of the partnerships with public sector agencies have already been discussed in preceding sections.

[17] Issue raised by stakeholders in workshop.
[18] Jütting, Johannes. (1999). *Public-private-partnership and social protection in developing countries: The case of the health sector*. Paper presented at the ILO Workshop on "The Extension of Social Protection," Geneva, Switzerland.

TOR Question: *How successful has the project been in leveraging non-project resources? Assess the ability of management to do so.*

The project reported being able to mobilize some resources from various organizations:

- Mobilized 2.8 million rupees (US$34,888)[19] under a vocational project partnership with the organization Aik Hunar, Aik Nagar (AHAN; meaning "one village, one product," Baluchistan).

- Provision of 4,000 sets of books free of cost by the Directorate of Education (Baluchistan).

- Provision of 400,000 rupees (US$4,984) as project share by the Society for Empowering Human Resources (SEHER) for vocational training, being organized for children in commercial sexual exploitation (Baluchistan).

- Bahadur Khan Women University trains children in gem cutting and polishing (Baluchistan).

- Collaboration with Fouji Foundation, a government-supported organization, to train 30 children in vocational skills (NWFP).

- Awareness-raising material from ILO-IPEC.

- Free premises in government schools for the ECE component.

- Other partners in NWFP, Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), Khwendo Kor, Pak Village Development Program, the Laas Gul Chamber of Commerce, and Media.

Although collaboration with these partners has substantially contributed to the success of project actions there is still room for improvement.[20] SC-UK noted that many local NGOs have low capacity, lack well-defined vision and/or have inadequate resources. In the case of other local NGOs there were disparities in terms of differences in target groups, priorities, time lines, and financial demands. The local NGOs generally wanted more time and resources to reach targets than was available in the MCLEP planning. As a representative from WESS stated, "They are looking at this from their perspective and we are looking from ours. We have very limited time and they set goals they want to reach way beyond the time period we can allot. In one case their course was about four months, for example, but we reduced it to three months. The government also said their courses were six months and we told them it needed to be shorter."

[19] As per the conversion rate on March 13, 2009 from website http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi.
[20] See Section 5.1.1 for a discussion of other entities.

Some of the local NGOs have highly valuable local experience. Cooperative efforts should be closely tracked to garner maximum lessons learned and good practices. SEHER in Baluchistan, for example, will provide vocational training to 350 male children who are currently involved in commercial sexual exploitation. SEHER's work and experience is important, as "there are hardly any organizations that have similar experience and skills of working on such issue in an orthodox society like Pakistan."[21]

According to project staff there is a lack of interdependence among local NGOs, which should ideally operate as a network and synergize their efforts. Participants in the stakeholders' workshop recommended that further investments should be made in the development of public-private partnerships.

Additional USDOL Question: *Are you able to feed into the development of a national or regional child labor monitoring system? If yes, how?*

The MCLEP does not have any specifically required deliverables to contribute to the development of a national or regional child labor monitoring system. In Baluchistan the Child Labour Unit will be in charge of a provincial child labor monitoring system. The project will share its experiences regarding the project monitoring system. Unfortunately, the government has not yet allocated any resources to the monitoring and evaluation component of the CLU. In NWFP the project was unable to establish cooperation with the provincial CLU (see Section 5.1.1). Staff members in the NWFP Child Labour Unit perceive the establishment of such a monitoring system as providing them with additional work and see it as a burden rather than a benefit. The project works with some government departments at the district level to develop mechanisms to identify how many children are in child labor and how to withdraw them.

The Education Department in NWFP has been more interested in improving their monitoring and evaluation system and benefitting from project technical support. SC-UK and WESS were able to provide support for the establishment of a Planning & Monitoring Cell within the Education Department. The Planning & Monitoring Cell is expected to contribute to improving and maintaining the quality of services provided by schools in the district. The Executive District Officer has been provided with opportunities for exposure such as visits and training on using the project database.

Additional USDOL Question: *Have there been any changes in the policies and strategies for the education of child laborers in the project area that the project was able to provide input for?*

WESS was able to successfully lobby for a policy that states that the Department of Education should notify schools that working or at-risk children should be mainstreamed from NFE into formal schools. A policy was also institutionalized that Baluchistan District coordination committees for Child Labor Units establish a child labor monitoring system. A vocational training course on precious stone cutting, carving, and polishing was also formally integrated into the government vocational training institute's curriculum, with the support of the project. Although no formal changes in policy are yet visible in NWFP/FATA, CMDO was able to

[21] According to another WESS representative.

demonstrate to the local government that they should consider additional alternative education opportunities for vulnerable children in general and working children in particular.

5.2 DIRECT ACTION PROGRAM RESULTS

> "Our children love to go to school. The standard of education is very good and they learn many things. They can read newspapers and the name of medicines."
>
> ***—Parent in focus group***

Parents were very positive about the advantages of the project for their children. Children themselves, however, are often the best sources of information on the specific advantages of any project that affects them. The evaluation included gathering information from children in 11 focus groups. The children reported on the advantages of their participation in the project, and mentioned the provision of school supplies, being educated instead of working, and being taught by good teachers. Some children also mentioned that they were learning difficult words, math and science, and "many interesting stories." Several of the focus groups also mentioned that the students in the NFE centers are actually more competent than those in the government schools. Parents often praised the availability of free education and school supplies as well as the good education offered through the project.

TOR Question: *The MCLEP project is implemented in areas of Pakistan that sometimes face security challenges and have a higher proportion of religious extremism and other societal problems than other areas of Pakistan. What effect, if any, has this environment had on project implementation?*

> "The fact that we are still able to run these centers despite the security issues. This is only because of the communities."
>
> ***—CMDO staff member***

Working under the deteriorated security situation in both of the provinces has been a major challenge. The project was sometimes compelled to stop field activities and even close down some NFE centers temporarily. Visits to some high-risk areas had to be curtailed in frequency, although most centers continued to be visited. A particular problem in some locations was the inability of men to visit girls' schools and centers while women were hampered from travelling to some areas, particularly in NWFP/FATA. In Baluchistan, women staff continued to be able to visit centers and even male WESS staff could occasionally visit girls' centers as long as the reason for the visit was clearly announced and accepted by the community representatives. Field teams addressed these problems by keeping a low profile and planning innovative strategies such as seeking increased coordination help from local communities.

5.2.1 Awareness Raising

> "The project team came to inform us that child labor is prohibited in the eyes of the law. We were blind about this reality. Now we understand that education is the right of every child."
>
> ***—Parent in focus group in Baluchistan***

The project used a wide-ranging variety of methods to raise awareness, including direct advocacy, presentations, and festivals; distribution of posters, bags, leaflets, and project briefs; and training children on awareness raising. Methods such as "awareness-raising walks" in which children and other supporters march with banners and other techniques involving children as participants were also intensive. Religious leaders were associated and announcements made in mosques. The project developed a four-session awareness-raising manual on child labor for field staff to use primarily in communities. A review of the materials indicates that the information contained in the manual is clear and comprehensive while precisely focused on child labor issues such as the reasons for child labor, national policies, international conventions and the effects of child labor on child, family and national development. Similar information is shared with a range of individuals including government officials, politicians, youth representatives, teachers, social activists, lawyers, and religious scholars.

Children in the 11 focus groups all reported that their school/center had participated in awareness-raising activities on education and/or child labor. They cited having participated in the community marches, skits on child labor, and singing and reciting poetry. One child reported a fringe benefit of the awareness-raising activities: *"We delivered speeches and sang poems. I got a prize for that. I also had chips and juice."*

Aside from raising awareness on child labor the project has also held workshops in Peshawar (NWFP) and Quetta (Baluchistan) to share the MCLEP NFE model. The purpose of the exercise was to advocate for further adoption and replication of project actions by government and nongovernmental organizations. Stakeholders from the Education Department, Nonformal Education Directorate, NGOs working on NFE, and media representatives attended the workshop. The event was widely covered by the media according to the project staff. Print and electronic media has also been used to disseminate messages about child labor across the provinces.

Additional USDOL Question: *Awareness raising is more important in Baluchistan and NWFP than in the Punjab where so much development has already been done. The areas have had less exposure and very little education. What is the impact of that awareness raising in that context?*

Awareness raising has been successful in sensitizing communities about the negative impact of child labor. According to project staff some parents still believe that they have no choice but to put their children to work, although they have started to realize that this is happening at the cost of their children's future. Parents and community group representatives in the stakeholders' workshop indicated that more awareness raising in the communities is still required. Sufficient materials to promote awareness need to be made available.

Children in one focus group showed an understanding of their status as working children by noting that: *"More activities should be organized so that we can show our talent to others and to overcome our inferiority complex."*

Teacher and parent participants in the stakeholders' workshop indicated that increased awareness of children regarding education was the most important success in terms of awareness raising. Parents and representatives of the community in the stakeholders' workshop also cited that the awareness of parents regarding the education of children was an important result of awareness-raising efforts. Parents and community members indicated that changing "social and cultural taboos" was not yet sufficiently addressed through the awareness campaigns.

Government officials in the stakeholders' workshop noted the usefulness of community meetings, national child labor days, and media in raising awareness. Most of the awareness campaigns and sessions were focused on information sharing, however, and less on behavior change communications.

It would be useful to increase the frequency and quality of community involvement in awareness raising, and the use of a range of different techniques including BCC. Flexible packages containing the core materials need to be accompanied by manuals on how to develop and adapt awareness-raising efforts to local socioeconomic and cultural factors.

Some participants in the stakeholders' workshop proposed that the success stories of the project children should be more widely disseminated. They indicated that children are not receiving sufficient encouragement from their own community regarding their efforts to be educated. Some participants also suggested that increasing the dissemination of project successes was also useful to convincing more government officials to support similar efforts in the public school system. Activities such as a celebration at the end of every course with the involvement of influential people (*nazims*) of the community and inline agencies can contribute to sustainability.

5.2.2 Nonformal Education

The project NFE component has been very effective because it has been well-targeted to provide quality education to working children in localities where they need it most. Many centers have flexible hours and are located in areas where there are no government schools. The project NFE program covers the standard five years of primary school in a period of 3.5 years. Some project-supported children complete the entire program in the NFE centers while others are mainstreamed after a transitional period in NFE.

The project built on the NFE experience of the earlier SC-UK ACL-QEFA project in the Punjab. Linkages between NFE centers and formal schools were mostly nonexistent prior to the ACL-QEFA project. Children in NFE tended to be older and were difficult to mainstream into primary grades (i.e., grades 1–5).

The ACL-QEFA project helped demonstrate that such linkages were possible and effective. Pakistan has a federal system of government in which each province determines whether such initiatives will be integrated into their education directives. The MCLEP project integrated

mainstreaming into their own project actions and is advocating for the institutionalization of mainstreaming in the project provinces. The most recent project data indicate that 2,584 project beneficiaries have so far been mainstreamed into the formal education system from NFE and ECE initiatives. Mainstreaming in Baluchistan is more challenging than in NWFP, partially because of the lack of formal schools near to communities into which children can transfer. Another aspect is that the current (second) NFE cohort will complete their program at a time of year that is not in tandem with the formal school system. Children will complete their program in the month of September, while vacation starts in November and continues to March in formal schools. This means that children will face a substantial gap of several months during which there is a possibility that they may be put into child labor. The current cohort is, furthermore, not slated to complete their NFE program until one year after the project is supposed to end (September 2010).

The project has worked on capacity strengthening of teachers through regular teacher training courses, which has resulted in good learning outcomes for children. Focus groups and stakeholder workshop participants mentioned several times that the NFE program is of higher quality than formal schools. In some cases children request to continue their education in the NFE system instead of being mainstreamed.

One aspect of the NFE program that needs to be reconsidered in future projects is the enrollment of only one cohort of children at a time. An entire cohort needs to pass through the NFE program before a new cohort can be introduced. Children can only be mainstreamed when they are ready in terms of educational, social, and emotional readiness so they do not all transition to formal schools at the same time. In some NFE centers there are fewer children over time as a result. Such spaces could potentially have been filled by other children who may have dropped out of school earlier but could have been integrated into NFE if the cohort system allowed such integration.

In some NFE centers, children with learning difficulties are being identified who cannot be promoted to the next level at the end of a particular academic session. Some of these children may need to be held back with the result that individual teachers will have to concurrently handle children who have been held back while also teaching those that are able to continue to the next level. According to official Pakistani Government policy, children in lower grades should be promoted to the next grade even if they have problems.[22] The project allowed children to progress to the next level during the first cohort group but the staff has determined that will not be the case in subsequent academic sessions because such children actually need extra attention. An alternate approach needs to be developed to meet the requirements of children with learning difficulties.[23]

[22] Research in different contexts has indicated that holding children back in lower grades does not necessarily mean that they will have improved results. A different situation arises, however, in the case of children with learning difficulties who need specialized or extra attention.

[23] Please note that the definition of "learning difficulties" and "learning disabilities" differs from country to country. In the U.S., "learning disabilities" is most often used, while in the UK the officially recognized term is "learning difficulties." Children with learning difficulties include those with lower than average intelligence scores, dyslexia, and related difficulties as well as those with other conditions that affect the acquisition, retention, understanding, organization, or use of verbal and/or nonverbal information.

An increasing level of demand for NFE and ECE is developing, particularly in areas where there are no formal schools. In those areas, children have been placed on waiting lists since, in accordance with the project design, the centers cannot include additional children until the cohort has completed the program. The inability to accept new children is affecting relations between the NFE and project field staff with communities. This issue is likely to be even more problematic if, after the project closes, the NFE and ECE programs are stopped (see Section VII on Sustainability). Project staff members suggest that in the future NFE centers should be allowed to add new children on an annual basis. This could mean adding new teachers and, consequently, higher costs.

Children participating in the stakeholders' workshop stated that they feel the teaching methods are very good, *"Teacher loves us and we like the teaching methods."* Parents also praised the teaching methods.

Although other stakeholders also report that the content of NFE programs is good and activity-based learning is promoted, additional interesting activities and increased focus on social issues are needed for the children's well rounded development. Motivating activities, particularly sports and games, were also suggested and should be more actively promoted. The NFE centers only teach for a limited number of hours per day (3 to 3.5 hours) to allow children who still work in the morning to attend. Despite this situation, however, more emphasis on such extracurricular activities is recommended after school or on holidays. A related issue that was raised in the stakeholder workshop is the need for centers to include more open space, or access to open spaces, so that children can take part in physical activities and outdoor games. More indoor educational games that are supervised by teachers can be introduced as well.

The issue of disciplining children in schools and centers was brought forward by several stakeholder groups in the workshop as a subject of concern in the project localities. SC-UK has a strict human rights policy and all partners are expected to sign an agreement that they will not engage in any kind of abuse of beneficiaries, including corporal punishment and sexual abuse. The project includes information about the rules concerning corporal punishment and abuse in their teacher training. A focus group consisting of teachers noted that corporal punishment and "mental torture" (their words) were avoided as a result of the project. Parents and children in some of the focus groups also mentioned that they appreciated that there was no corporal punishment in their center. The project monitoring forms includes a question for children on whether there is any corporal punishment in their center. According to the project no corporal punishment has yet been found. Performing an analysis of the circumstances in which children are asked this question would be useful. As the stakeholder workshop facilitator who is a child psychologist pointed out, "The issue is clearly very sensitive and children may hesitate to come forward unless they feel safe in doing so." Children in the workshop did mention that they are worried about some teachers' anger and the problem of corporal punishment in general. Children also stated that "children should be treated with love and not with beating." No child reported that they received corporal punishment in the centers themselves. Continued attention to the avoidance of corporal punishment and the training of teachers on alternative methods to teach children self control is needed as at

least some children report being fearful. SC-UK and the NGO partners can also continue to lobby for anti-corporal punishment strategies in government schools.[24]

Religious education is part of the national curriculum from grade four onwards, so it is necessarily being taught at the NFE centers. The project has taken steps to comply with USDOL requirements that no funds should be used to provide for religious education. To compensate for the time taken for religious subjects, the teachers volunteer an extra half-hour after school to teach the subject. The books on religious education are either obtained through the Department of Education or donated free of cost by the stationery/supplies contractor.

Although some stakeholders' workshop participants praised the physical environment of the NFE centers, others noted that the level of hygiene at NFE centers could be improved. Parents also noted that the number of NFE centers needs to be augmented to meet the needs of the many working children. Parents requested that NFE centers also teach higher levels of education beyond primary school in areas where no formal school is available. In at least one other country an "Open School" system has been established that provides the possibility for children to learn independently or with the support of tutors, NGOs, or volunteers.[25] Children can then take equivalency exams through 10th grade. Options for integrating or adapting such a system could be explored. Some community focus groups mentioned the importance of the provision of equivalency certificates to children completing NFE so that they can continue their education. As a first step, NFE equivalency exams will need to be formally recognized in all provinces, so aiming toward any variant of the Open School system is likely to take time.

Teacher salaries in the NFE centers are low, partially because many do not have official diplomas but are community members who have been trained by the project. Project staff reported that one of the challenges they faced was that there was a lack of good professionals to teach in NFE and ECE centers, partially because of the lower salaries that could be offered. Teaching at NFE centers is a part-time position, teachers only teach for 3.5 hours per day and the salary package is adjusted accordingly. Teachers noted that they have to spend 10 to 15% of their total salary per month on the cost of transport to travel to collect their salary, and suggested that efforts be made so that they can collect their salary from a nearby center. The SC-UK project staff reports that the salary package provided through MCLEP is almost the same as that given by various other organizations in their NFE projects. The project staff further added that in consideration of inflation levels, SC-UK plans to provide higher salary packages in future projects to ensure that teachers are highly motivated to provide quality work.

[24] Save the Children has collaborated with UNICEF in the past on ending corporal punishment, as indicated in an article on the UNICEF Pakistan website: "UNICEF and Save the Children are calling for an end to corporal punishment on Universal Children's Day on Tuesday, November 20th, 2007. This call to action follows on from research that indicates corporal punishment is widespread, especially in disaster-affected communities. Every day, children suffer physical and verbal abuse at their schools, homes, and workplaces..." UNICEF. (2007). *Save the Children and UNICEF urge an end to all forms of corporal punishment.* Retrieved on February 2, 2009, from http://www.unicef.org/pakistan/media_3667.htm.

[25] In India, the India Gandhi Open School.

Children are routinely assessed to determine how well they are doing so that lesson plans and methods can be adjusted to meet their needs. The project has developed a series of methods to address some of the issues that have been identified through the tests. Education promoters (project field staff) have, for example, adopted a cluster-based mentoring approach through which teachers are provided content-based support in weaker subjects.

Some focus groups indicated that it is important that NFE centers be established in remote areas where no other form of schooling exists. As one group stated, "These centers should be established in far-flung areas so that the people over there may get awareness and they may not involve their children in child labor."

5.2.3 Vocational Training

Additional USDOL Question: *Are the youth able to find employment? Is it working better in certain areas than in other areas?*

All stakeholders cite the option of vocational training as a tool to address child labor as potentially very useful. Vocational training is thought to address one of the root causes of child labor quite directly—namely, poverty. As of September 2008 a total of 775 children were enrolled in vocational training programs, of which 625 children had completed. Children were enrolled in courses in gem cutting and polishing, vehicle repair, beautician training, embroidery and stitching, chair weaving, small scale repairing and computer hardware repair. Training was provided in collaboration with existing vocational training centers.

The vocational training component of the project was challenging for several reasons:

- Lack of good training institutes in the project implementation areas.
- Most children find it very challenging to enter into the labor market and earn a livelihood upon completion of vocational training because of the presence of competitors who have already captured the market share in their particular work/trade.
- Short duration of available training courses.
- Lack of micro-financing opportunities to obtain basic equipment or establish independent enterprises.
- Low salaries of (government) vocational training center teachers.

The project is currently in the process of tracking vocational training to assess their success level in terms of benefiting from livelihood opportunities.

The low number of training institutes was particularly problematic in Baluchistan as compared to NWFP. The project has been able to introduce training in gem cutting as a new type of trade, which is expected to lead to better employment opportunities as compared to some of the other types of vocational training in Baluchistan. Twenty-five girls in Baluchistan have already completed training in gem cutting and polishing and a group of boys are currently undergoing training.

Although the original intention of the project was to provide a combined package of literacy and vocational training, the staff found that most children eligible according to the selection criteria were school dropouts who already had basic literacy skills. As a result, the literacy component was dropped from the program.

An interesting aspect was the association of mothers with the skills development program in Baluchistan, particularly where courses were organized for girls. The male project manager at WESS even reported that he managed to visit the families of female children in the vocational training programs while accompanied by female staff.

A wider variety of vocational training courses need to be developed to meet labor market possibilities. Parents in the stakeholder workshop suggested that more technologically updated skills should be taught. Ideas could include Computer Centers, such as in Zambia where older children provide typing and other administrative support to customers. In the future, it would be advisable to study local labor market needs, particularly among small and medium businesses, combined with mapping and brainstorming about possibly marketable skills. Developing a wider array of courses is, however, a major challenge as such courses require well-trained teachers, equipment, and need to be close to where children live, particularly in the case of girls. The project has tried to promote "doorstep skills training," which is provided by trainers in or very near the homes of girls. Such training is also difficult to develop but opportunities to do so need to continue to be piloted and assessed.

Several stakeholders noted that the vocational skills training programs are very useful in diverting the attention of children away from risky behaviors that threaten their security and that of others.

There is a strong need to market the products of the vocational centers so that they can become more self-sufficient as income-generating activities. Government officials noted that the skills training is often only available in a scattered manner, which is not conducive to good coordination of efforts. Children in the stakeholder's workshop pointed out that additional equipment, such as sewing machines, computers, and tools are needed for good vocational skills training. Community members in the stakeholders' workshop noted that the majority of communities have not yet benefitted from the vocational training opportunities although they would like to. Advocacy for the resource mobilization of existing government vocational training infrastructure to rural areas is recommended by the project staff and NGO implementing partners.

5.2.4 Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education is a new component in child labor projects in Pakistan. The MCELP includes 2,000 children in the ECE program. The Pakistani Government had recognized the usefulness of such education a number of years ago, but its quality and availability had reduced over the years. As stated in the project document, children who attend early childhood education

have been shown to be (a) more likely to enroll in school, (b) more likely to enroll at the right age, (c) more likely to stay in school, and (d) more likely to succeed at school.[26]

In NWFP, spaces in government schools were easily available for the ECE component of the project. In Baluchistan this opportunity did not exist so it was more of a challenge to initiate ECE, which needed to be placed in private buildings. Establishing ECE centers in government schools proved to be a very good strategy as it facilitated the mainstreaming of children completing ECE into these schools. CMDO reported that all of the children enrolled in their ECE program were mainstreamed directly into first grade and there were no dropouts.

Working with government schools in ECE also made it easier to work closely with government teachers because it was possible to demonstrate this model to them on a daily basis. Daily exposure contributed to interest in and acceptance of the model. The 18-month duration of the ECE program in the selected government schools contributes to the development of the capacity of government teachers to continue the model after project activities are phased out. Teachers, however, strongly suggested that the ECE program should continue to be funded externally for a longer period of time.

Some government education representatives in focus groups in Baluchistan expressed concern that the conditions in ECE centers are of such high standards that children may have difficulty adapting to the lower standards of government schools. Project staff reported that in some areas, a teacher in a government primary school may have as many as 100 to 200 students. WESS reported that the ECE program made it possible for NGO-partner field staff to work more intensively with mothers, as opposed to NFE programs where fathers played a key role.

[26] U.S. Department of Labor and Save the Children—UK. (2005). *Mitigating Child Labor through Education in Pakistan (MCLEP)*. Washington, DC and Islamabad, Pakistan: Authors.

5.2.5 Social Safety Nets: School Supplies Assistance Programme (SSAP)

> "The school supplies provision in government schools is very effective. It serves as a precautionary measure against child labor and improves attendance."
>
> ***—Teachers' focus group***

TOR Question: *Please assess the effectiveness of interventions involving families.*

The school supplies assistance program is currently assisting 3,220 children enrolled in government primary schools with uniforms and school supplies. The selected children are at risk of dropping out and entering child labor as defined by the project criteria. The stakeholders in both the focus groups and the workshop unanimously emphasized the importance of uniforms and school supplies as a key motivating factor that helps ensure that children go to school and stay in school. Children in all 11 focus groups particularly stressed the usefulness of the educational materials that they were provided. WESS and CMDO representatives note that the program has contributed to good attendance and retention. CMDO adds that the government has started providing free books while UNICEF is also providing bags and some other materials in NWFP.

Parents in focus groups noted that they needed assistance to find employment, loans, and development programs so that children do not have to work, the poverty rate can go down, and parents can purchase school supplies. Parents propose very practical forms of assistance that would benefit their families and reduce child labor, such as providing equipment and tools for their occupations as well as fertilizer for farming.

Additional USDOL Question: *Is there resentment in the communities because everyone is needy? How do you deal with that?*

This issue of resentment over SSAP arose in Baluchistan. Parents protested robustly that only a select number of children were provided with supplies, saying, "But it should be for all!" WESS started a rigorous community mobilization process through meetings with parents and other community members to explain the objectives of the program in more detail. Parents were briefed on the process of identifying the neediest children, including the selection criteria, which calmed down the protests in the communities.

5.2.6 Improvement of Quality in Government Schools, NFE Centers, and Vocational Training Centers

> "Teachers are now keener to maintain child interest in class rather than just teaching the routine syllabus."
>
> ***—NWFP Teachers***

TOR Question: *Please assess the effectiveness of the "direct action" interventions on the withdrawal/prevention of targeted children and their enrollment, retention, and completion of the educational services or training opportunities.*

The project has placed strong emphasis on improving education quality, particularly in terms of teaching skills. The effect of these efforts is most clearly notable in the NFE and ECE components. According to project staff, delegations from Education and Social Welfare Departments that have visited MCLEP centers have stated that the learning achievements of an NFE student are often better than those of children studying in a formal rural primary school. Government officials have even praised the quality of the project's NFE and ECE centers in public forums.

Interest in project ECE centers was so high that even relatively middleclass people tried to pressure the project field teams to allow the enrollment of their children. Such parents believed that the ECE centers were of higher quality in their respective localities as compared to even private schools. The project reports that field teams put in great effort to help such parents understand that these centers were not for everyone but only for the children who fall under the prescribed criteria for ECE centers.

Teachers are trained on action-based learning methods, preparation of lessons plans, motivating students, and other key issues that influence learning effectiveness. Each NFE center is supplied with story and general knowledge books. The project has education promoters who regularly visit, provide mentoring, and monitor the teaching methods in the centers. Although security issues in NWFP/FATA cause some problems in terms of the provision of such support, CMDO reports that 90% of the schools with female children are regularly visited. In other schools, the number of visits is halved from four per month to two per month. Community committees facilitate the visits, which helps ensure security. The project and NGO partner staff report that there is actually a strong interest in educating girls, and the statistics on the retention of girls is very good. The principal problem for girls is that there are a few government schools in disrupted and isolated areas, and girls cannot go further than two to four kilometers away to attend primary school. Poverty is clearly one reason for child labor, but distance to schools is another causal factor.

CMDO reported that some parents have come to report that they are happy that the project is providing education, as it helps reduce the peer pressure among children to join in and support armed conflict against the government security forces. Community members in the stakeholders' workshop reported that one of the key advantages of the project was that "the NFE centers provide opportunities to be away from social evils and drug addiction problems."

One stakeholder reported that "they even grab the children that are out of school and train them in militancy. The educated children have a better vision and see their future as more secure."

WESS staff indicated that, while factors such as school supplies are important, other factors in government schools such as teacher behavior and the physical and learning environment also influence dropout rates. CMDO reported that minor repair work on formal school buildings contributed to enrollment and retention rates, especially in girls' schools where conditions are particularly scrutinized by parents. Minor repairs such as construction of latrines, water tanks, building white wash, and construction of windows and doors was effective. Staff noted that the financial investment was very low—30,000 Pakistani Rupees (US$373) in the case of Baluchistan—but the cost benefit ratio was very high.[27] Teachers and students also appreciate the Learning Resource Centers, which include a library and other learning materials.

In Baluchistan, WESS has been able to establish a good working relationship with the Provincial Institute for Teachers' Education, which is a government institute. In NWFP this was more problematic, as the quality of the PITE is less well-developed. In Baluchistan all the teachers from both project districts are invited every six months for three to four days to attend teacher training. Prior to attending the sessions, teachers complete a training needs analysis. The same teachers attend each session to prepare them for the next successive level in the NFE education that they are expected to deliver. The teachers are trained on how to interact with the children and what their role as teachers should include.

Teachers in focus groups were very positive about the teacher training. As one group in NWFP affirmed, "It polished the abilities of teachers to teach even better." In Baluchistan, teacher focus groups provided statements such as, "We learned to use different methodologies to teach children, which helped them to show their hidden talents." Government officials and other stakeholders noted that refresher training for teachers in all government schools as well as NFE and ECE should be conducted regularly over the long-term.

Parents in some focus groups in Baluchistan appreciated the teachers, "Teachers are sincere with the children and work hard. Teachers also have good communication with the community as they meet with people and tell them about the benefits of education." Parents in another focus group in Baluchistan noted that "our complaints are given due consideration and things are rectified. Some community focus groups mentioned the importance of continuing to support and monitor teachers, develop more extracurricular activities, and improve infrastructure. Community members in the stakeholders' workshop recommended that teachers should be trained in how to address "social problems" in their lessons.

Children in the 11 focus groups mostly appreciated their teachers and the teaching methods, citing aspects such as activities that make the lessons more interesting, competitions, and good educational materials. Children appear to have a very good understanding of what constitutes the behavior of a good teacher. Some children in one of the NFE focus groups were not very happy with their teacher whom they said came late, did not teach them well, and did not check their

[27] At the exchange rate on February 11, 2009, this is equal to about US$380.

notebooks as frequently as he should. According to some government education officials, a few NFE teachers still need additional training and supervision as their skills are still not sufficient.

Some teachers in focus group discussions in NWFP commented that the monitoring and mentoring provided through the project were one of the top advantages of the actions. They also said, "Activity-based learning is an example of this project to be quoted proudly." The project has developed clearly defined quantitative and qualitative indicators that are used for monitoring, but also guide planning on teacher training and mentoring. A review of the qualitative monitoring system of teachers in NFE and ECE indicates that essential aspects of good teaching are well covered. The forms are clear and straightforward, and include teachers rating and conditions on a simple scale of one to four. The forms are used by the education promoter during their observations of the centers, and to ask the teachers and children targeted questions on teaching methods. Aspects covered in the monitoring form include assessment of teacher's skills such as voice use, clarity of explanation, use of simple language and frequent examples, use of the blackboard, encouragement of students to work independently, attention of the students, and orientation on the subject matter. The monitoring form also includes questions on the physical environment of the school such as availability of educational learning materials, lighting, cleanliness, among other things.

Teachers in focus groups noted that ensuring that government schools improve their quality would be very beneficial; likewise, ensuring that all government schools and all institutions pay regular and adequate salaries would also be very beneficial. Teachers stressed that the quality of education in government schools would be vastly enhanced if there were more infrastructure improvement, which would greatly contribute to retention rates.

Various focus groups also emphasized the importance of continuing to develop the quality of education to ensure that children attend and remain in school. As one group stated, "If the standard is high, then children will go and get that education."

5.2.7 School Councils, Quality Education for All Groups, Mothers Groups, and Citizen Community Boards

> "We were able to start an organized society at our community level, which is very active, and in the future it will be very beneficial for our community."
>
> ***—Community focus group members, Baluchistan***

TOR Question: *What have been some of the challenges and issues in working with local-level organizations?*

The project has worked intensively with parents and community groups to develop awareness and support for project activities. The project promoted the active involvement of families and community members through joint group meetings and home visits that emphasized sensitization, mobilization, and motivation. In areas with security problems, the presence of well-functioning community support groups has been found to be particularly important. Stakeholders indicated that these efforts helped result in good retention rates, particularly as compared with

government schools. Parents and community group representatives in the stakeholders' workshop cited increased community volunteerism as an important success of the project. At the same time, some parents in the stakeholders' workshop indicated that there is still a reticence among some parents to be closely involved.

The involvement of families and parents from the initial stages of work in any community, starting with the identification of beneficiaries, has contributed to success and ownership. Parents are actively involved in enrollment, retention, and education through activities such as monitoring the teachers in term of attendance, teaching, and treatment of children.

According to many stakeholders, communities often lack trust in NGOs, which impeded acceptance of project initiatives in the initial phase. Teachers in one focus group mentioned that there was also low initial community mobilization because community members feared that the project was operated by Western missionaries. A successful project is the best "proof" of a trustworthy NGO, but awareness raising can also include more focus on explaining the overall background of the project and the implementing NGOs. Although religious leaders were associated, community representatives in the stakeholders' workshop recommended that their involvement should be increased to more effectively address NGO trust issues. Some parents requested that coordination with the police department could also be increased to help address the deteriorated security situation in the project areas.

Some of the participants in the stakeholders' workshop, including teachers and community representatives, noted that the coordination between all of the community-level stakeholders needs further improvement. It is important to ensure that this statement is well understood. Stakeholders were pleased with the project's relationship to the communities, but they note that among the community stakeholders there should be more coordination.

Two focus groups of parents in Baluchistan also complained about the lack of interest of local authorities in their centers. They stated that elected officials say they will meet the community representatives to discuss the centers or to visit the centers, but they never actually do so. Parents in the NWFP focus groups were pleased with the support of the local authorities citing specific individuals and how they helped them. In one case, a focus group even reported that the authorities were able to ensure that the center was supplied with fans.

Teachers suggested that community-level coordination could be improved by hiring more local teachers in the NFE centers and involving government teachers more directly in project activities. Some teachers in focus groups also emphasized the importance of further increasing the organizational skills of community groups as a tool to improve school/center quality.

5.2.8 Improving the Knowledge Base

Additional USDOL Question: *Has there been any knowledge sharing among the partners at the field level (i.e., beyond senior management sharing)? How often and how was this done?*

The project has developed a strong knowledge management system. The achievements are regularly shared with different government and private organizations, such as with the CLUs, the PCCWD in Baluchistan, the Department of Education in NWFP, and different community-based organizations. This approach enables the project team to share project successes and weaknesses with communities. The project and its NGO partners conduct regular review meetings to discuss and plan adjustments and improvement in project actions. CMDO also notes that there are very few organizations working on child labor issues in the project areas, but the field teams—particularly the education promoters—have trained some other organizations in monitoring and teaching methodologies.

A document—capturing the lessons learned and good practices in the project that can be widely disseminated among other agencies working in Pakistan and elsewhere—is recommended. As the project is nearing its final implementation phase, the time to conduct the necessary research has come.

5.3 IMPACT

TOR Question: *What appears to be the project's impact to date, if any, on (a) individual beneficiaries (children, parents, teachers); (b) partner organizations (local NGOs, community groups, schools); and (c) government and policy structures in terms of systemwide change on education and child labor issues?*

The impact of the project on the individual beneficiaries to date has been positive. More time is needed to determine the impact over the long term, particularly since one cohort of children will only complete the program after the end of the project period. Some of the challenges have been discussed in preceding sections. The impact of longer-term benefits is highly dependent on the local security situation. If the security situation improves, children that have been mainstreamed are likely to stay in school and not return to child labor. Children who have completed vocational training have acquired skills that can lead to potential employment, although skills need to be better aligned with local labor market needs. Efforts such as working with community groups to promote and sustain education are successful, but such actions can only be effective in the long term if, likewise, the security situation does not deteriorate further. In one area of the NWFP with a high security risk (Swat Valley), 170 schools have been destroyed and 55,000 children are no longer going to school.[28] While there is clear interest and support from parents—as is clear from the desperation of parents wanting access to support from the project—NGOs, the government, and projects can only do so much to provide education under the existing circumstances.

[28] Khan, Junaid. (2009, January 20). Taliban blow up Pakistani schools. *Bangkok Post*.

The project is sharing its direct action experiences by participating in various meetings at the national level, but dissemination of project experiences is needed to have a greater impact on systemwide change on child labor and education brought through this project.

VI MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION, CAPACITY BUILDING

6.1 PROJECT PARTNERSHIP, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION

TOR Question: *What have been the major issues and challenges of initiating and maintaining the core project partnerships (SC-UK, CMDO, and WESS)?*

Unlike in the ACL-QEFA project in Punjab, the provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan did not have any NGOs that were highly specialized in child labor or education. SC-UK needed to invest time and effort in the capacity strengthening of CMDO and WESS on the subjects of education and child labor. The NGOs also needed to align their management administration and finance system so that it was in line with SC-UK and USDOL reporting requirements. Both partner NGOs were highly interested in learning new approaches and were flexible in adopting new strategies. CMDO and WESS are satisfied with the cooperation they have had with SC-UK. WESS noted that one of the major advantages, aside from technical support, of working with SC-UK was the smooth functioning of administrative and financial systems and timely disbursements. Disbursements are often a key factor, and they influence good implementation of efforts in the field. Having a good system without excessive bureaucratic hurdles for disbursement is, therefore, an admirable SC-UK accomplishment.

The project partners appreciate the technical follow-up and support mechanisms of the SC-UK project staff. SC-UK project staff members as well as project partners report that they have good team relationships. Project partners report that the SC-UK staff members visit regularly and that staff members also visit when they are requested to do so outside of regularly planned visits.

The NGO project partners of the ACL-QEFA project in Punjab were associated as key resources during the initial project stages to share their lessons learned and good practices for the development of the new MCLEP project. According to project staff, there were “many things that we adopted from the previous project such as database software, monitoring mechanisms with certain modifications. This saved our time, effort, and also gave us confidence as the in-house capacity was readily available for utilization.” The ACL-QEFA partners also assisted with the capacity strengthening of the new partners, CMDO and WESS. The new partners visited the ACL-QEFA project areas and were able to learn directly from observing their field experiences and through discussions with staff.

The local partner representatives did state that the situation in their provinces is very different from the Punjab. In Baluchistan, for example, there are few factories, the social context is different, and the forms of child labor are different. They report that, even though the situations are different, they were still able to learn from the experience of ACL-QEFA but needed to adapt methods to their own local situation.

6.2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

TOR Question: *What are the management strengths of this project? Assess the degree to which project management has effectively utilized tools such as the project work plan, log frame, and project monitoring plan to enhance strategic planning and target setting. Please assess the effectiveness of the management procedures between SC-UK and its partners.*

The project has substantial management strengths as compared with many other projects that the evaluator has assessed. MCLEP has a project document with a well-developed logical framework, performance monitoring plan (PMP), and timeline. The project team found that the Technical Assistance Workshop provided by USDOL was very helpful for understanding the project and set targets. The quality of the workshop and other USDOL technical assistance helped in the development of the PMP and data tracking sheet. Staff members also reported that the workshop helped them to understand the definitions of the USDOL common indicators and the terms *withdrawn* and *prevented*. They noted that there had been "very rich discussion on the concepts. It was really the whole team that was involved; we all collectively agreed on the targets. This enhanced our confidence in terms of the way we move forward."

CMDO particularly noted that the time taken to plan project implementation in the initial stage was very useful. The clear criteria and guidelines developed for each project component assisted staff and project partners to implement and manage the project. The technical and administrative support of the SC-UK Pakistan Programme Office to the MCLEP project staff were efficient and contributed to the delivery of qualitative and quantitative results within a difficult security context. NGO project partners and the SC-UK monitoring officer note the clarity of roles and responsibilities at all the levels. As the WESS staff reported, "The project has specified the role of each staff from bottom to top; clear guidelines have been developed for the role specification of M&E, social organizers, education promoters, and teachers."

The entire project team, together with SC-UK senior staff, holds quarterly review meetings. Discussions center on details related to targets, project implementation, and financial aspects. Decisions are discussed and mutually agreed upon for implementation during the next quarter's work plans.

The technical director (education)—a former senior program staff officer at SC-UK—had provided technical support to the ACL-QEFA project. The technical director provided useful input based on her technical expertise and experience in Bangladesh and with ACL-QEFA to contribute to the development of the MCLEP. Project staff and NGO partner staff all cited her positive contributions. SC-UK project staff particularly considered her support crucial and helpful for the MCLEP project team to understand the project and devise the delivery mechanisms. Her position was no longer required and was phased out due to a restructuring and appropriation of the necessary technical expertise by existing SC-UK staff.

Project staff members appreciate the appropriate and adequate support and response from USDOL on their reports. Staff members also value the regular updates that USDOL provides on changes that have been taking place regarding the policies and management guidelines.

TOR Question: *What are management areas, including technical and financial, that could be improved?*

Despite these positive factors, there is still some room for improvement. Issues that project staff members cited include the following:

1. Diversity of project components (NFE, ECE, Literacy and Vocational and School Supply Assistance Programme) addressing the needs of different age groups, which the project found challenging to remain focused on and to ensure quality standards.

2. Scattered project implementation sites. Project interventions are carried out in two provinces (NWFP and Baluchistan) with two different NGOs, resulting in challenges to maintaining uniform standards of implementation.[29]

3. Capacity of partner organizations. Child labor and education were relatively new areas for the partner NGOs, thus requiring substantial effort and inputs to build their capacities in these areas.

4. Deteriorating security situation in the country, specifically in NWFP/FATA tribal areas, which affected management of project sites.

5. Definitions of types of hazardous labor need to be clarified so that types of hazardous labor can easily be identified in different contexts.[30]

CMDO requested that capacities of staff be strengthened further so that they can implement more advanced financial systems. WESS pointed to the complexity of multifaceted issues in child labor and requests more capacity building on the "latest concepts" related to project implementation in line with ILO Conventions 138 and 182. Teachers in NFE centers reported that the amount allocated for building rent and utility bills is not sufficient and that they sometimes have to contribute from their own resources to manage such expenses.

WESS reported that they had great difficulties to monitor the project in some of the remote areas, as they only had one vehicle per district. SC-UK then assigned the vehicle of the ACL-QEFA project after it closed and more additional transport was also provided. When planning projects in remote and dispersed areas, it is important to plan for adequate transport so that technical support and monitoring can be effectively implemented.

[29] Implementation should be carried out according to certain standards to ensure that project indicators are met. The NGOs had different capacities when the project was initiated and continue to have different strengths and challenges due to the dissimilar contexts. A partner NGO may be effective in terms of creating linkages to government institutions, while another has more difficulties because government staff are less interested/motivated. As a result, it is not reasonable to judge and compare their results without taking these factors into account.

[30] A WESS representative cited one example of a kind of labor about which they were unsure if it would fall under the definitions of hazardous labor. The work consists of collecting wood in the mountains under difficult conditions but for use in their home.

The project staff members consider that it would be very useful for the USDOL staff to conduct field visits to the projects so that they could have a better understanding of the work delivered in the field. Staff members stated that this will help increase understanding from the direct observations that may not be possible by only reading the Technical Progress Reports. The staff members recognize how difficult it is to handle the security issues but believe that it would have been useful if it were possible.

Additional USDOL Question: *Regarding the extension—given the challenging work environment, what kind of work will you be able to do?*

The project will try to compensate for some of the slowdown in implementation that resulted from the security problems in the project areas during the extension period. This will be particularly important for the NFE and vocational training targets. The project will apply for a "no-cost" extension.

6.3 PROJECT MONITORING

TOR Question: *How does the project monitor and measure the USDOL common indicators, specifically the withdrawal and prevention of children from child labor?*

The project has developed the PMP and data tracking table (DTT) based on the logical framework, with technical support from USDOL (see previous section). Each indicator and tool is associated with clear key instructions, which staff see as a road map to the project's goal. The project measures the USDOL common indicators using the definitions discussed in Section IV.

The project also tracks other relevant information in addition to the USDOL common indicators. Information collected includes qualitative data based on assessments made of implementation in the NFE and ECE centers. The project adopted and adapted the database that was first developed in the ACL-QEFA project, but added the education quality data and data on the ECE component into the database system. CMDO reports that several NGOs have approached them to assist them with their own monitoring system, as they have heard that it is effective and not too complex. WESS reported having already shared some of their experiences on monitoring with other agencies informally. Both CMDO and WESS highly recommend the system and suggest that it can also be shared with other USDOL-financed projects.

The project staff reported that it is difficult to identify well-qualified monitoring and evaluation specialists because of a lack of trained professionals in the market. They note that "international NGOs tend to monopolize the human resources through high remunerations."

Children in all 11 focus groups reported that their school/center is monitored. They state that parents, project staff, and/or community leaders visit and verify the school/center activities. Community involvement in the monitoring process is good; although, according to the NGO partners, the education level of community members is generally too low to track specific aspects such as the quality indicators, although they do verify retention and environmental cleanliness. Four community groups were included among the focus groups, of which two stated

that the child labor and education monitoring is not easy to do. They state that they are "now aware about child labor and education," but that it is time-consuming to support and monitor the centers in addition to doing their regular tasks. During the stakeholders' workshop, some participants reported that the participation of the community in the monitoring of activities helped contribute to their sense of ownership.

Teachers and government officials in the stakeholders' workshop cited as one of the strongest project successes the project's good performance in the area of monitoring the NFE centers. Teachers stated that the centers are visited weekly for technical support and tracking results. Government officials noted that there should be a third-party validation of the monitoring forms so that they can be considered objective.

TOR Question: *What technological tools is the project using to monitor beneficiary data? Are these tools effective?*

TOR Question: *The project has a special focus on educational quality as part of the project strategy. How effectively is quality being measured?*

The project uses the database processing and analysis software that was initially developed for the ACL-QEFA project, which was adopted by the MCLEP with some modifications. In NWFP, the project has added tracking of centers and children's homes using general packet radio service coordinates to ensure high-quality data.

Frequency of data collection depends on the nature of the data. Data on quality are collected monthly, data collected for reporting in the Technical Progress Reports are collected every six months, and data on mainstreaming is collected annually.

Project staff reported that data collection and data entry were both "quite a cumbersome process," but that the result is useful because the kind of data that were collected were valuable for planning purposes. CMDO reports that the database is well organized and actual data entry is not complicated. A WESS representative added that the technology enabled the staff to track results "just with a click." Quantitative data on beneficiaries, their retention, completion, and dropout rates help the project determine if it is on track and if steps need to be taken to address issues in these areas. The quality indicator data are considered to be quite helpful because they provide a complete picture of teaching efforts and the classroom environment. The project monitoring and evaluation specialist reported that it was quite easy to calculate results for such qualitative indicators. Given the fact that the qualitative monitoring system has now been successfully implemented in two projects, the evaluator proposes that USDOL consider sharing these methods with a wider range of projects in different countries.

Data are collected by the field teams, which are composed of social mobilizers and education promoters. The methods include making observations and asking questions of all stakeholders.

6.4 EFFICIENCY

The project has worked efficiently, particularly considering the difficult security situation and the disparate project sites. The project has contributed to maintaining efficiency by ensuring that sufficient transport is available to reach isolated areas so that it can reach project targets. The project has managed to leverage extra resources from a variety of sources (see Section 5.1.2). The evaluation did not allow for a review of the budget and spending pattern. Project staff reported that spending is within the planned budget and that it can afford a much needed, six-month, no-cost extension to compensate for some delays due to security issues.

6.5 GENDER ISSUES

Addressing the gender issues is quite challenging in the context of the project areas. As project staff indicated, the sociocultural environment in NWFP and Baluchistan is quite orthodox because local Pashto communities are more traditionalist than any other ethnicity in the country. Some of the issues regarding gender have already been discussed in previous sections of the evaluation report.

Organized community groups in most project sites consist only of males, while in some tribal areas there are mixed gender groups. Education for girls is generally well accepted until puberty, when attendance starts to drop. The project enrolled an almost equal number of boys and girls. A focus group consisting of community civil society groups noted that the program promotes the educations of girls as well as boys, which they consider to be "a positive sign." Two teachers' focus groups in NWFP emphasized the fact that the project contribution to the education of girls was one of the top positive aspects of promoting education. Focusing on girls was sometimes a challenge because they are more vulnerable in the local context and require more support to acquire education. Wherever possible, the project hired female teachers for the NFEs and ECEs. Project staff reported that they have found that females prove to be good and responsible teachers; they have also found that, wherever there are female students, the presence of such female teachers is a priority before parents will send their daughters to school.

The project hired both male and female staff to ensure that community-level interaction with female students and parents is in line with local norms and values. An attack on the NGO CMDO office in 2008 was accompanied by threats to female staff, which had serious consequences for the mobility of the female staff. Female staff consequently had to continue their work based in their own homes and had to limit monitoring visits to some of the areas of higher security risk.

Two of the focus groups consisting only of fathers requested that more efforts should be made in the future to include women in project activities and also to develop income-generating programs for women. Women were more easily involved in the ECE programs, which is in line with local cultural norms. According to one document by the Ministry of Education, "Even in some families the family members, especially mothers, begin imparting moral values and basic concepts of

literacy and numeracy, to children, even at the age of two. Role of mothers as educators is very important in Pakistani society."[31]

[31] Ministry of Education. (2000). *National Plan of Action for Education for All 2001–2015: Pakistan*. Retrieved on February 2, 2002, from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/hrdr/init/pak_6.htm.

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VII SUSTAINABILITY, REPLICATION, AND CAPTURING OF LESSONS LEARNED

> "It is frightening that if this project ends we will be unable to afford the educational expenses of our children."
>
> ***—Parents in Baluchistan focus group***

TOR Question: *What steps have been taken so far to promote sustainability and continuation of education strategies for combating child labor beyond the life of the project?*

TOR Question: *Was the project's initial strategy for sustainability adequate and appropriate?*

Parents and many other stakeholders consistently request that the project should be extended. They also request that children be covered until they have completed higher grades than are currently supported through the project. Many have also expressed concerns about the long-term sustainability of project efforts. The original sustainability plan currently appears adequate and appropriate.

The project has recently organized two provincial-level workshops for the stakeholders, with special emphasis on government officials, to widely introduce the NFE model program. Discussions centered on implementing strategy, effectiveness, and relevancy to addressing educational and child labor. Reactions have been encouraging. In NWFP, the governor of the province has asked the project to prepare a proposal for an NFE program for child laborers in at least in one FATA Agency.[32] The governor has also agreed that the provincial government either fund the project from its own resources or will identify donors and link them with the implementing NGO, CMDO. Additional project presentations will be held for the national and provincial Steering Committee of Education. The project is negotiating with the National Education Foundation, which is developing the NFE model nationwide, so that they can adopt the MCLEP centers in Baluchistan after the project ends. The establishment of the ECE initiatives within the confines of government schools will contribute to sustainability possibilities since such schools are more likely to absorb the model.

The project has also worked toward the establishment of the Education Planning and Monitoring Unit in Peshawar, the activation of the Child Labour Unit in Baluchistan, and the establishment of the vocational training Gem Cutting Centre in Bahadur Khan Women University. In Baluchistan, 13 of 29 districts have already formed district child labor committees, partially with support from the project. A Skill Development Workshop is being established by the SEHER organization with the financial support of MCLEP.

Community-based organizations are regularly encouraged to continue with the NFE centers in their area after the project ends. The project is providing technical support on fundraising so that the teachers' salaries and running expenditures can be met. One factor concerning the teachers' salaries is worth considering in this context. Although there are some complaints and suggestions

[32] FATA is divided into areas called "agencies" which are similar to districts in terms of governance.

that teachers' salaries are too low, the current salary levels will be easier for communities to assume after the project ends. If salaries were relatively high, the chances that communities could take over these charges would be more doubtful. Parents in the stakeholders' workshop indicated that they are not aware of any clear sustainability plan. It is important that discussions on sustainability be clearly labeled so that communities understand that their contribution is relevant and will lead to a community sustainability plan.

TOR Question: *What lessons could be learned to date in terms of the project's accomplishments and weaknesses in terms of sustainability of interventions?*

Most stakeholders noted that only providing education services will not be sufficient for the efficient replication and sustainability of the project model.[33] As one project staff member pointed out, "In the absence of rampant poverty, mere provision of education services will not solve the problem of the working children and bring them out of hazardous working conditions." Linkages to livelihoods programs are necessary besides ensuring access to education.

Poverty alone is not the only reason for child labor. Parents also put their children to work because they do not want the children to roam aimlessly in locations where no quality formal school is available. Although NFE is a very useful mechanism to withdraw and prevent child labor, the development of accessible and quality formal education over the long term is crucial. Stakeholders see NFE only as a temporary solution to a wider problem related to formal education.

It is necessary to establish appropriate vocational training institutes that teach skills responsive to local labor market conditions and that are oriented to the needs of child laborers. Similarly, education departments—including the NFE model and/or evening schools—need to launch programs designed to meet the needs of child laborers. Small investments in infrastructure—such as the provision of drinking water and latrines—in government schools have a high cost-benefit ratio of impact on reducing dropout rates.

TOR Question: *What effect is the challenging implementing environment having on prospects for sustainability?*

The stakeholders identified a number of challenges to sustainability efforts, including the "increasing poverty and inflation rates; lack of government infrastructure and commitment; high corruption; lack of political will of the government; and other actors to work with vision and dedication." Also affecting sustainability is the lack of government schools in some NFE project areas into which children can be mainstreamed. Several focus groups mentioned that many children and families are dependent on the support provided through the project and may drop out of school if such support is halted. The uncertainty of the security situation also influences investments in government schools. Aside from UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, there are very few other nongovernmental resources available to assist in funding NFE and/or school supplies programs. Project staff also pointed out

[33] Stakeholders expressed these points in different ways, but their ultimate meaning is clearly oriented toward replication and sustainability.

that the structure of USDOL-supported EI programs do not allow for allocations to support sustainable efforts during a progressive phasing-out period beyond the basic core time period allotted to the project. It would be advisable for future projects, in complex environments such as in the MCLEP, to include reduced funding levels for direct sustainability efforts beyond the three-year project period. A one-year period during which the project could work with reduced staff, but with high concentration on sustainability of project initiatives, would be a good investment. This period would need to be added to the normal project implementation period since the duration of core project implementation is already short.

Project staff members also indicate that the targets that they must achieve are probably somewhat high within the context of the project area, which means that efforts are highly focused on the withdrawal and prevention aspects. They state that they have had very little time to "think about livelihoods and poverty alleviation aspects." Some parents also question whether attending primary school will really mean that their child will have a better life.

Almost all focus groups mentioned their concern about the replication of the project with future cohorts. As one group of teachers stated, "The closing of these centers will be the major issue faced by the community in the future." Some were concerned about the impact of the project actions on children in the long term since children have started to have hopes about their future, which may go unfulfilled.

Additional USDOL Question: *How is the general situation with child labor in the project areas now? Is it getting worse now?*

The issue of child labor in the project areas is grave, and the situation has remained unchanged for several years. Principal reasons have already been discussed in previous sections and include absence of formal government schools, the increasing poverty, unstable political situations, and deteriorating security conditions.

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VIII CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the project is on track and is likely to come close to meeting targets, particularly if a well-deserved project extension is allotted. The difficult security situation contributed to a slowdown of project implementation, which can be compensated for during a project extension. The project has a well-functioning management system including good administrative and financial disbursement mechanisms. The project has been able to build a substantial number of good partnerships in the project areas with government agencies, other local NGOs, local authorities, community-based organizations, teachers, parents, and children. Some local partners are not yet strongly convinced of the usefulness of cooperating effectively with the project. Capacity strengthening of existing and new local partners needs to continue. Awareness raising has been effective in drawing attention to the consequences of child labor and the lack of education of children on their physical, mental, moral, and emotional development. Support for policy change to ensure that strategies reducing child labor and promoting education, particularly in high-quality government schools, needs to be intensified. The project has invested a great deal of time and effort to improve the quality of education through teacher training, improvement of the physical learning environment, provision of learning materials, and school supplies.

The project has effectively built on the experience of a previous SC-UK child labor education project in Pakistan. A well-qualified SC-UK education technical expert, together with staff from the former NGO project partners, contributed substantially to adapting the lessons learned in the previous project. Of particular note is the well-functioning monitoring and evaluation system that also includes useful qualitative data indicators. The M&E system is not only used to track data, as is commonly the case, but is actually vigorously used in project planning and adaptation. The qualitative monitoring component is clear and easy to use and replication in other projects is recommended. Efforts have been undertaken to start working on sustainability. Children directly involved in the project are likely to sustain through the program and will continue to benefit after the project ends. Although the project is not expected to ensure that NFE centers continue after the project period it would be valuable if NFE centers and vocational training programs continue after the end of the project. There are concerns among stakeholders that long-term sustainability of NFE centers will not be feasible. Likewise, the ending of support to children currently receiving school supplies support may result in school dropout and a move into child labor for some of the project beneficiaries.

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IX RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED, AND GOOD PRACTICES

9.1 KEY LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

1. Taking sufficient time to plan a project during the inception phase has high dividends for effective project implementation.

2. MCLEP has a project document with a well-developed logical framework, performance monitoring plan, and timeline. The clear criteria and guidelines developed for each project component assists staff and project partners to implement and manage the project.

3. The provision of technical support in the form of a USDOL-organized Technical Assistance Workshop is very useful to helping staff develop the PMP and other key project implementation and reporting tools.

4. Instituting a well-organized series of interactions with a similar previous project to discuss and adapt lessons learned and good practices is a wise investment.

5. Through the use of needs surveys, MCLEP developed good systems for the identification of problems, targeted allocation of funds, and selected project sites.

6. Good technical and administrative support of the implementing NGO (SC-UK in this instance) is very helpful for the delivery of qualitative and quantitative results within a difficult security context.

7. Involving government officials and local authorities in action planning and implementation is key to achieving effectiveness.

8. Where teacher training institutes are effective and good partners, such as in Baluchistan, high impact on the quality of teaching is significant.

9. Females proved to be good and responsible teachers in the project areas. Assuring female teachers is a priority for parents, before they will send their daughters to school.

10. Vocational skills training programs are very useful to divert the attention of children away from risky behaviors that threaten their security and that of others.

11. Small investments in infrastructure in government schools—such as the provision of drinking water and latrines—have a high cost-benefit ratio of impact on reducing dropout rates.

12. The involvement of families and parents from the initial stages of work in any community, starting with the identification of beneficiaries, contributes to success and ownership.

13. Strong emphasis on the development of well-functioning community support groups has been found to be particularly important in areas with high security risks.

14. The project has developed clearly defined quantitative and qualitative indicators that are used for monitoring but also to guide planning on teacher training and mentoring. A good qualitative education monitoring system has a strong effect on improving quality of teaching.

15. Poverty is one of the key contributing factors to child labor and needs more attention in future projects.

16. Poverty is not the only reason for child labor. Parents also put their children to work because they do not want the child to roam around aimlessly in locations where no formal quality school is available.

17. Although NFE is a very useful mechanism to withdraw and prevent child labor, over the long term the development of accessible and quality formal education is crucial. Stakeholders see NFE only as a temporary solution to a wider problem related to formal education.

9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluator recommends that the project build on the lessons learned and good practices included in Section 9.1. Section 9.2 includes additional key recommendations for consideration in this and similar projects. The evaluator recommends that the project and NGO partner staff study the recommendations to determine which ones can still be adapted and integrated into the remaining time for project implementation given the resources available. Please note that if a recommendation is made it does not necessarily mean that there was a shortcoming in the project that needs to be addressed. In some cases, recommendations are made to further strengthen and build on existing experiences and efforts. In other cases recommendations are made based on points brought forward by staff—such as on capacity strengthening of staff. Recommendations marked with the term “current project” should be particularly considered for the current project.

The project should be extended for at least six months to compensate for the slowdown in project implementation due to security issues.

Project Design and Project Inception

1. More assistance is needed in future projects to assist with the definition of whether a particular activity would be considered hazardous for children.

2. In high security risk areas the degree to which overall security should be considered in determining if an activity is hazardous or not needs to be determined.

3. When planning projects in remote and dispersed areas it is important to plan for adequate transport so that technical support and monitoring can be effectively implemented.

4. To overcome distrust of NGOs in communities pay special attention to explaining the overall background of the project in detail, as well as the past experience and focus of implementing NGOs and their field staff.

Policy Development and Awareness Raising

1. Involve parents and community group representatives to advocate for significant changes in government policies to withdraw and prevent child labor through education. Hold regular meetings of community representatives, parents, and teachers to discuss children's progress but also see how they can lobby for policy change (current project).

2. Continue to advocate strongly for coordination, orientation, and harmonization of rules and regulations protecting children from child labor and their right to education (current project).

3. Use an even wider range of different techniques, including more Behavior Change Communications methods. Flexible packages containing the core materials need to be accompanied by manuals on how to develop and adapt awareness-raising efforts to local socioeconomic and cultural factors. Increase resources for awareness-raising materials and scaling up (current project).

4. Provide sufficient printed and other materials to promote awareness (current project).

5. Disseminate success stories of the project children more widely, particularly within communities so that project children will receive more encouragement from their own community about their efforts to be educated (current project).

Nonformal Education Programs

1. Extend financing beyond the potential project extension period for NFE centers after the end of the project. If teachers are paid and centers remain open, children are more likely to remain in school until the end of formal school vacations in March. Extending financing during this time period would also help ensure that there is adequate time to prepare children well for mainstreaming.

2. The evaluator would support a move for such financing but does not know if this is at all feasible. For this reason the evaluator is not including any recommendation on this issue in the formal report.

3. Study the options for adding additional children into ongoing NFE programs as spaces become available, because some children from one cohort have already been mainstreamed into formal schools.

4. Continue training NFE teachers until project end to ensure that their skills are adequate. Carry out tests of teachers' knowledge in addition to a final, more intensive qualitative monitoring exercise near project end. Develop a manual with key points on pedagogy that teachers can use as a memory trigger (current project).

5. Study alternatives or alternate approaches to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties attending the NFE and ECE programs.

6. Develop options for additional interesting activities for children's well-rounded development. Interesting activities, particularly sports and games, are needed and could be more actively promoted (current project).

7. Study and work with communities to allocate more open space, or access to open spaces, so that children can take part in physical activities and outdoor games (current project).

8. Include training for teachers on how to address social issues such as drug abuse and other locally defined issues (current project).

9. Replicate the NFE model as developed in the project to other areas affected by child labor.

10. Advocate intensively at national and provincial levels so that NFE equivalency are formally recognized in all provinces (current project).

11. Hold celebrations at the end of every course with the involvement of influential people (*nazims*) of the community and other stakeholders (current project).

12. Advocate for the development of a system whereby children can learn independently or with the support of tutors, NGOs, or volunteers beyond primary level. The option would include enabling children to take equivalency exams up through 10th grade (current project). It is useful to provide the option for girls as well as boys.

13. Enhance wage levels for teachers and staff to ensure high motivation (in future projects). Keep wages for teachers within a reasonable range so that it will not be very difficult for communities to find funding to continue supporting the centers after a project ends.

14. Identify and put in place systems so that teachers do not need to travel long distances or spend substantial sums for travel costs when they collect their monthly salaries (current project).

15. Advocate with government and other partners for the provision of regular refresher training for teachers in all government schools as well as NFE and ECE (current project).

16. Determine which NFE centers would benefit from improved hygiene, develop and implement a system to address hygiene issues in such centers (current project).

17. Continue to provide close attention to the avoidance of corporal punishment and the training of teachers on alternative methods to teach children self control. SC-UK and the NGO partners can also continue to lobby for anti-corporal punishment strategies in government schools (current project).

18. Study and implement options for public-private sector funding of infrastructure improvements in government schools in rural areas (current project).

Vocational Training

1. In future projects, carry out a study of local labor market needs, particularly among small and medium businesses, combined with mapping and brainstorming about possibly marketable skills.

2. Identify additional types of vocational training options, including those with updated technology that are labor market oriented. Identify systems whereby apprenticeship programs could be developed, as has been done in some other USDOL-funded projects.[34]

3. Identify and promote links to microcredit or employment opportunities (current project).

4. Consider including a number of sessions for youth on simple feasibility studies, marketing, and basic bookkeeping (for example on keeping a basic cash book).

5. Advocate for the resource mobilization of existing government vocational training infrastructure to rural areas (current project).

6. Develop a system to market the products of the vocational centers so that they can become more self-sufficient as income-generating activities.

7. In future projects, ensure that the budget includes sufficient funding for training equipment in vocational centers.

Early Childhood Education

1. Involve community-level stakeholders to lobby for formal adoption and financing of Early Childhood Education in existing schools, and advocate for replication in additional schools. Provide transport for community stakeholders to attend advocacy sessions in provincial and/or district centers (current project).

2. Promote scholarships for vulnerable children in private Early Childhood Education Centers (current project).

School Supplies Assistance Program

1. Increase lobbying at national and provincial level by involving key stakeholders, including community members, to ensure that vulnerable children are assisted with school supplies (current project).

2. Step up efforts to find additional donor support for school supplies assistance to current and future children at risk of child labor (current project).

[34] Such as that implemented in the HIV Induced Child Labour Project in Uganda and Zambia.

Partnerships: Communities, Local NGOs, Government

1. Advocate that government develop additional rules and regulations to adopt successful initiatives developed through NGO and other donor-assisted initiatives (current project).

2. Continue to build and strengthen working relationships with government entities. Promote coordination between government entities with regards to project initiatives (e.g., between education and child labor departments/units) (current project).

3. Assist community groups to improve their organizational skills as a group. Provide capacity strengthening on networking, group coordination, leadership, community problem analysis, and problem solving (current project).

4. Further increase the involvement and role of religious leaders as key community partners (current project).

5. Increase development of public-private partnerships (current project).

6. Continue to develop the role of community members in monitoring of activities and work with them to develop a monitoring system that can be sustained after the end of the project (current project).

Management, Monitoring, Sustainability, Dissemination

1. Develop a methodology that will assist field staff to verify whether working conditions are hazardous or non-hazardous so that they need not rely solely on a list that may not be adapted to locally prevalent types of child labor. Such a methodology would then need to be integrated into the monitoring system.

2. Strengthen capacities of project partner staff further by sharing experiences of other child labor projects with them, including from other countries (current project).

3. Strengthen capacities of project partner staff on advanced financial systems.

4. The selection of project areas needs to be linked to availability of microcredit, adult education, and/or other livelihoods development opportunities so that linking can be more effective. The budget also needs to include an allocation to cover the cost of networking with agencies that promote livelihoods.

5. In the existing project, increase linking to other local services, such as for livelihoods support or other mechanisms for poverty alleviation (current project).

6. In future projects, in complex environments such as the MCLEP, include reduced funding levels for direct sustainability efforts beyond the three-year project period. A one-year period during which the project could work with reduced staff but with high concentration on sustainability of project initiatives would be a good investment.

This time period would need to be added to the normal project implementation period since the duration of core project implementation is already short.

7. Given the fact that the qualitative monitoring system has now been successfully implemented in two projects, the evaluator proposes that USDOL consider sharing these methods with a wider range of projects in different countries (current project).

8. All children enrolled in the project—whether mainstreamed early or at the end of their NFE program—need to be tracked throughout the project implementation period. It is important to note that monitoring also serves as a tool and not just for reporting purposes. Tracking children mainstreamed in an early stage will help ensure that mechanisms are in place so that such children can be monitored and actions to return them to school can be undertaken if necessary.

9. The evaluator recommends that children should continue to be monitored even if their attendance falls below 75%. They should be monitored for the same time period as are children who have not dropped out. If a child's attendance improves to 75% or more for at least two months, during this time period they can be counted as retained.

10. Clearly label discussions on sustainability so that communities understand that their contribution is relevant, and work with them toward the development of a community sustainability plan (current project).

11. Some of the local NGOs partnering with the main NGO project partners have highly valuable local experience; cooperative efforts should be closely tracked to garner a maximum of lessons learned and good practices.

12. The project developed good systems for the identification of problems, and targeted allocation of funds and selection of project sites through needs surveys. Develop and disseminate among other agencies working in Pakistan and elsewhere a document capturing the lessons learned and good practices of this project.